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Official communiqué of the 6480th (closed) meeting of the Security Council

Held in private at Headquarters, New York, on Monday, 14 February 2011, at 10 a.m.

In accordance with rule 55 of the provisional rules of procedure of the Security Council, the following communiqué was issued through the Secretary-General in place of a verbatim record:

> "At its 6480th meeting, held in private on 14 February 2011, the Security Council considered the item entitled 'Letter dated 6 February 2011 from the Permanent Representative of Cambodia to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2011/58)'.
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> "The President, with the consent of the Council, invited the representatives of Argentina, Australia, Belgium, Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Canada, Croatia, Egypt, Finland, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Iraq, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Malaysia, Mexico, Myanmar, New Zealand, Norway, the Philippines, Poland, Romania, Singapore, Spain, Thailand, Turkey and Viet Nam, at their request, to participate in the consideration without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.
>
> "The Security Council heard a briefing under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure by Mr. B. Lynn Pascoe, Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs.
>
> "The Security Council heard a statement by His Excellency Mr. Hor Namhong, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of Cambodia.
>
> "The Security Council heard a statement by His Excellency Mr. Kasit Piromya, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Thailand.
>
> "The Security Council heard a briefing under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure by His Excellency Mr. R.M. Marty Natalegawa, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Indonesia, Chair of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations.

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"The members of the Council, His Excellency Minister Hor Namhong, His Excellency Minister Kasit Piromya, His Excellency Minister Natalegawa and Mr. Pascoe had an exchange of views."

United Nations S/PV.6481

Security Council

Sixty-sixth year

Provisional

6481st meeting

Tuesday, 15 February 2011, 10 a.m.
New York

President:	Mrs. Viotti	(Brazil)
Members:	Bosnia and Herzegovina	Ms. Čolaković
	China	Mr. Wang Min
	Colombia	Mr. Osorio
	France	Mr. Bonne
	Gabon	Mr. Moungara Moussotsi
	Germany	Mr. Wittig
	India	Mr. Manjeev Singh Puri
	Lebanon	Mr. Salam
	Nigeria	Mrs. Ogwu
	Portugal	Mr. Moraes Cabral
	Russian Federation	Mr. Churkin
	South Africa	Mr. Mashabane
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Parham
	United States of America	Mrs. DiCarlo

Agenda

Briefing by the Chairperson-in-Office of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room U-506.

11-23402 (E)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Briefing by the Chairperson-in-Office of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe

The President: Under rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure I invite Mr. Audronius Ažubalis, Chairperson-in-Office of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Lithuania.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I now give the floor to Mr. Ažubalis.

Mr. Ažubalis: It is a great pleasure for me to address the Security Council as Chairperson—in-Office of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). With 56 participating States spanning the Euro-Atlantic and Eurasian regions, the OSCE is the world's largest regional organization under Chapter VIII of the United Nations Charter. We highly value the close cooperation that we enjoy with the United Nations in the maintenance of international peace and security.

The OSCE Summit, held in Astana last year, set the strategic direction of the organization. In Astana, OSCE Heads of State and Government recommitted themselves to the vision of a free, democratic, common and indivisible Euro-Atlantic and Eurasian security community, rooted in agreed principles, shared commitments and common goals. This message was echoed by the United Nations Secretary-General who spoke eloquently at the Summit of the core principles and common values on which both organizations are based, and called for closer cooperation in order to expand peace, advance human rights, generate sustainable development and build a safer world. Lithuania's chairmanship of the OSCE will try to work towards the realization of these goals.

Allow me now to present our chairmanship's priorities. These include tangible progress in addressing protracted conflicts; improved implementation of media freedom commitments; strengthened OSCE response to transnational threats, including those emanating from outside the OSCE area; enhancing the OSCE's role in the area of energy security; and finally, promoting tolerance education throughout the OSCE area.

Let me address some of this year's central issues. With respect to protracted conflicts, as Chairperson-in-Office I place high priority on seeking progress in the resolution of these conflicts, fully respecting the norms and principles of international law enshrined in the United Nations Charter, as well as the Helsinki Final Act. We will continue to pursue active OSCE participation in the political process aimed at settling the Transdniestrian conflict on the basis of full respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Republic of Moldova. During my recent visit to Chisinau and Tiraspol, I met with the political leadership on both sides of the Dniestr River to discuss the settlement process. I remain cautiously optimistic — especially after recent consultations with my counterparts in Moscow, Kyiv, Berlin and Brussels — that this year we will be able to resume official negotiations in the five plus two format.

The OSCE role in pursuing a settlement of the Nagorny Karabakh conflict through stronger engagement by the co-Chairs of the Minsk Group will be maintained. We invite the conflict parties and other OSCE participating States to consider options for confidence-building measures and to strengthen OSCE monitoring activities, particularly in the light of growing tensions on the ground.

The chairmanship remains committed to the OSCE's active engagement in the framework of the Geneva international discussions to reduce tensions and build trust among affected communities. Geneva is a unique forum in the sense that three major international actors — the European Union, the OSCE and the United Nations — plus the United States and Russia, are working closely together for security and stability in the region. The full-fledged participation of a representative of the United Nations is extremely important to the success of this process. Therefore, there is a vital need to find here in New York a long-term arrangement ensuring continuous United Nations representation at the Geneva talks. We will urge all participants to take full advantage of the Geneva framework to develop measures to improve security and alleviate humanitarian needs. We will work with the participating States to explore possibilities for extending the OSCE's activities on the ground, including through a meaningful OSCE presence.

As Chairperson, I place media freedom in general and the safety of journalists in particular very high on the Chair's list of priorities for 2011. As a former journalist, I understand the importance of being able to work in an environment free of intimidation. Working with the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media, in Vilnius in June we will organize a conference on the safety of journalists. I look forward to active United Nations participation in that event.

In my opinion, it was disappointing that OSCE standards, including media and election standards, were not met during December's presidential elections in Belarus. The chairmanship also regrets the decision of the Government of Belarus to terminate the work of the OSCE Office in Minsk. The Office has provided valuable assistance to Belarus, its people and Government in strengthening institutions, consolidating the rule of law and fostering relations between the Government and civil society, in accordance with OSCE principles and commitments. In our view, this work is not complete. We remain engaged in consultations with the Belarusian authorities to explore ways in which the OSCE can continue to support the Government and people of Belarus.

During the Lithuanian chairmanship, programmes to develop tolerance education and to combat hate crimes and all forms of discrimination will be encouraged and further promoted.

Crises and conflicts in the OSCE region over the past several years have demonstrated the urgent need to strengthen our organization's capabilities to act effectively across the entire conflict cycle. The OSCE does this in a variety of ways, including through its field presences, the work of its Vienna-based secretariat, and its three specialized institutions. We must provide early warning when there are signs of smoke. Despite progress in recent years, some areas of the OSCE — such as parts of the Caucasus, South-East Europe and Central Asia — remain vulnerable.

Early warning must be followed by early action. That is why we have been quick to respond to recent events in Albania. In close coordination with the European Union and other concerned parties, we have engaged in a continuous dialogue with Government and opposition leaders. We will continue, via the OSCE field presence and in cooperation with our international partners, to monitor the situation and provide assistance where we can. I trust that our efforts will help to reduce tensions there.

Last year, the OSCE community was faced with a crisis in the Fergana Valley. The situation has calmed down to some extent, but tensions remain. The OSCE Community Security Initiative, developed jointly with Kyrgyzstan, is the key international response to the violence in that fragile State. As we speak, OSCE personnel are deploying to southern Kyrgyzstan. The Initiative will help the Kyrgyzstan authorities to address the specific security situation that evolved in the country after the June events. In implementing the Community Security Initiative, we stand ready to cooperate with the United Nations to achieve the maximum synergy from our efforts.

Let me now turn to OSCE cooperation with the United Nations. A long-standing example of successful OSCE-United Nations cooperation in the field is Kosovo. There, the OSCE Mission (OMIK) continues to implement its mandate under Security Council resolution 1244 (1999) as an integral pillar of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo. It is the Lithuanian chairmanship's intention to ensure that OMIK continues to play its agreed role, working to ensure the security and well-being of all communities in Kosovo. The chairmanship shares United Nations concerns about reports of human organ trafficking in Kosovo during the 1990s, and supports the call for an independent investigation and clarification of the facts.

Following the adoption by the General Assembly in September of the Serbian- and European Union-sponsored resolution 64/298 on Kosovo, the Belgrade-Pristina dialogue offers a concrete opportunity to move forward on issues of mutual concern and to improve the lives of ordinary people. The OSCE stands ready to contribute to this process in areas where it has the relevant expertise. In Astana, the OSCE's participating States agreed that in facing emerging threats, such as terrorism, organized crime and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, greater unity of purpose and action must be achieved.

Recognizing the leading role of the United Nations in the fight against terrorism, the Lithuanian chairmanship is firmly committed to fruitful cooperation with United Nations bodies in promoting the universal legal framework against terrorism. At the Astana Summit, the Secretary-General called upon the OSCE to join the fight against proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. Working with the participating States, the chairmanship will facilitate the implementation of resolution 1540 (2004).

We also intend to step up our response to organized crime. As a regional arrangement of the United Nations, we can do more to help States implement the Palermo Convention and its three Protocols. We will also look at how to strengthen the capacity of participating States to respond to emerging challenges, such as cybersecurity. To this end, we intend to hold an OSCE conference on this topic during our chairmanship. Active United Nations participation in that event would be most valuable and highly appreciated.

Based on its own experience in the Baltic region, Lithuania believes strongly in the value of regional and subregional cooperation. We see cooperation at that level as a tool to promote genuine security and stability, to resolve conflicts and to achieve sustainable economic development. In our interconnected world, we must place special focus on cooperation between the OSCE and adjacent regions.

In that spirit, the Lithuanian chairmanship will intensify its work in support of United Nations-led international efforts to stabilize Afghanistan, which is an OSCE partner for cooperation. Our primary goal will be to counter the transnational threats stemming from its territory. We will work through concrete projects, in close cooperation and coordination with the Afghan authorities, our own Central Asian participating States, the United Nations and other international actors and organizations active in the region.

The OSCE experience could also be an example to other regions of the world, including among our Asian and Mediterranean partners for cooperation. We stand ready to share our experience and expertise where they are needed, for example in the Middle East and the Korean peninsula. Twenty years ago, the OSCE played a key role in managing the challenges of transition in Eastern Europe. In these times of dramatic change in Tunisia and Egypt, perhaps the OSCE toolbox, principles and institutions could provide inspiration to others.

We will continue to share the wealth of OSCE experience in cross-dimensional security with other regional organizations, such as the African Union, the League of Arab States, the Conference on Interaction and Confidence-Building Measures in Asia, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations Regional Forum and the Organization of American States.

I thank members of the Security Council for their attention.

We look forward to ongoing practical cooperation between the OSCE and the United Nations. The more effective that the OSCE can be in promoting security and cooperation in Europe, the more time the Council will have to devote to other challenges in the other areas of the world.

The President: I thank His Excellency Minister Ažubalis for his briefing.

I shall now give the floor to the members of the Council who wish to make statements.

Mrs. DiCarlo (United States of America): I would like to welcome Foreign Minister Ažubalis to the Security Council and to thank him very much for his comprehensive briefing today.

As a member of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), the United States is committed to working with other participating States and the OSCE secretariat to advance the organization's work in its three areas of competence, namely, the political-military, economic-environmental and human dimensions. The OSCE's comprehensive approach to security and practical focus across all three dimensions make it a valuable partner to the United Nations in addressing global security challenges, both within and outside the OSCE region. I would like to highlight four areas of beneficial OSCE cooperation with the United Nations.

First, in January's debate (see S/PV.6472) on post-conflict institution-building and in last week's debate (see S/PV.6479) on security and development, the Council noted that the sustainability of a peace process often hinges on strengthening key national institutions in the immediate aftermath of conflict. This is particularly vital in the areas of the rule of law and security sectors. The OSCE has been an indispensable partner of the United Nations in this regard.

In the Balkans, as one of the pillars of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo, the OSCE has played an important role in helping to build and advise Kosovo's institutions from the ground up. We commend the OSCE's work with the Government of Kosovo to increase governmental transparency and good governance, in particularly at the local level.

I would also like to note the contributions of the OSCE to the international community's efforts to help stabilize Afghanistan, in particular in helping the Afghan people to strengthen border security, fight drug trafficking and promote development.

Women must have an equitable stake in post-conflict peacebuilding and decision-making in their communities. The United States supports further OSCE efforts to increase gender mainstreaming and the issue of gender-based violence in the security sector, as well as to encourage more participating States to implement national action plans.

As the United Nations looks for ways to make its civilian response more effective in post-conflict situations, we should consider whether there are ways to better leverage the existing capacity-building expertise of organizations such as the OSCE.

Secondly, the United States commends the conflict prevention and conflict resolution role played by the Chairperson-in-Office and the organization as a whole. We appreciate the OSCE's co-chairmanship with the United Nations and the European Union of the Geneva discussions that bring together Georgia, Russia and participants from the de facto authorities in Abkhazia and South Ossetia. The OSCE's facilitation of the Joint Incident Prevention and Response Mechanism for South Ossetia is important for addressing ongoing security and humanitarian concerns on the ground. We urge participants to meet regularly to address practical issues and enhance confidence-building measures. The United States supports the re-establishment of an OSCE presence throughout Georgia and the continued travel to Georgia by its Special Representative on Protracted Conflicts. We also note the OSCE's quick response in the wake of last year's violence in Kyrgyzstan and the recent efforts by the OSCE's community security initiative to support the Kyrgyzstan police in reducing tensions and providing security for all communities in Kyrgyzstan. Such efforts have helped prevent further violence and contribute to long-term stability.

Thirdly, we cannot separate the human dimension from peace and security. True security in the OSCE area can only be achieved with participating States' full implementation of OSCE commitments to respect human rights and fundamental freedoms. Towards that goal, we particularly welcome the emphasis placed by the Chairperson-in-Office on advancing freedom of the media and of expression, especially where new media and digital technologies are concerned.

Finally, we welcome the emphasis by the Chairperson-in-Office on strengthening efforts to counter transnational threats, including by promoting the implementation of Security Council resolutions to counter terrorism and proliferation. Strengthening our common security involves not only countering new unconventional transnational threats such as terrorism and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, but also organized crime and illicit trafficking.

The United States welcomes and encourages OSCE efforts to strengthen its regional, subregional and international cooperation. In that regard, we look forward to further cooperation between the OSCE and the United Nations.

Mr. Parham (United Kingdom): May I also welcome the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Lithuania, Mr. Ažubalis, to the Council today. I thank him very much for his briefing.

The United Kingdom welcomes Mr. Ažubalis's assumption of his role as Chairperson-in-Office for 2011. We fully support the work programme that he has set out for us this morning. In particular, we welcome his human rights and good governance priorities, alongside hard security issues. Implementing his programme of work will not be an easy task. The members of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) must work collectively and with vigour to meet the many challenges we will face over the coming years. The Commemorative Declaration issued at the OSCE Summit in Astana last December (see A/65/688) pointedly reaffirmed the OSCE's principles and commitments. Delivery will require close cooperation with international organizations, including of course the United Nations.

Progress on protracted conflicts has been elusive. It is therefore right that Mr. Ažubalis has prioritized this. We were disappointed at the failure at the Astana Summit to agree language on protracted conflicts, notably on Georgia. That prevented the OSCE from agreeing an even more ambitious and comprehensive framework for action. The United Kingdom welcomes the role that Mr. Ažubalis has already played in attempting to advance dialogue on the Transdniestrian conflict, as well as his commitment to pursuing a settlement in Nagorny Karabakh.

In Georgia, the OSCE has worked with the United Nations and the European Union as a co-chair of the Geneva talks. We remain convinced of the need for an OSCE presence in Georgia, including in the region of South Ossetia. We welcome the continued efforts to explore all options to that end.

The response to the Kyrgyzstan crisis last April was a demonstration of the effective cooperation between the OSCE, the European Union and the United Nations Regional Centre for Preventive Diplomacy for Central Asia. Those three bodies worked towards resolving the situation and restoring peace and stability.

Developing and strengthening key institutions and civil society is key to sustainable conflict resolution. The OSCE's field operations conduct crucial activities in those areas. We therefore regret that the office in Minsk will close. Its mandate remains relevant and important. Much more needs to be done to ensure the protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms in Belarus. We reiterate our call to the Belarusian Government to reconsider its position.

Human rights and fundamental freedoms are an essential element in promoting and maintaining peace and security. That includes freedom of the media. Too many journalists in several OSCE States work We also commend the close cooperation between the OSCE and the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo.

The prestigious role of the OSCE Chairmanship-in-Office brings with it important responsibilities to promote and embody the principles of human rights and fundamental freedoms, democracy, good governance and the rule of law, on which the OSCE is founded. The work programme set out for us underlines that Mr. Ažubalis has a clear and pragmatic vision for making progress on all of those areas. We offer our full support to his efforts to achieve those objectives.

Mr. Wittig (Germany): I would like to join my colleagues in warmly welcoming the Foreign Minister of Lithuania to the Council today. May I also thank him for his comprehensive briefing setting out the priorities of Lithuania as Chairman-in-Office of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) for 2011.

Germany shares the Chairman's priorities and looks forward to working with Lithuania on the key issues facing the OSCE. Let me briefly comment on three aspects.

First, we consider progress in the resolution of protracted conflicts in Eastern Europe and Asia to be of particular relevance. The OSCE plays an important role as a facilitator in this regard. However, no success can be achieved without the political will of the relevant players on the ground. Unresolved issues in Moldova, Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan have to be addressed by partners in a consensual and peaceful manner and on the basis of respect for human rights, including minority rights.

Germany commends the OSCE's active participation in the political process aimed at settling the Transdniestrian conflict. The Chairman-in-Office has already conducted helpful consultations with the parties involved. The recent formation of a coalition Government in Moldova provides an opportunity to move forward. We encourage parties to take up discussions in the formal five plus two talks as soon as possible.

Germany welcomes the role of the OSCE in pursuing a settlement of the Nagorny Karabakh conflict within the framework of the Minsk Group, and agrees with the Chairman-in-Office that a strengthening of the OSCE monitoring activities could prove beneficial.

On Georgia, we remain committed to the principle of an OSCE presence as part of the international monitoring of the situation. We continue to support the active engagement of the OSCE in the ongoing Geneva international discussions to reduce tensions and build trust among affected communities. We also stress the importance of the functioning of the two incident-prevention mechanisms. In this context, we urge the conclusion of a swift agreement concerning the continued funding of the work of the United Nations representative to the Geneva talks.

Secondly, Germany wishes to express concern regarding the closure of the OSCE office in Minsk by the Government of Belarus. We share the views presented by the Lithuanian Chairman-in-Office on this issue. The OSCE office in Minsk makes an important contribution to strengthening institutions and the rule of law in Belarus, and its work has not yet been completed. Germany appreciates the efforts made by the Lithuanian chairmanship to reopen the office and ensure that it can continue with its mission.

Thirdly, let me underline that Germany attaches great importance to close cooperation between the OSCE and the United Nations. Cooperation in the fight against terrorism, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and organized crime are important examples of areas in which the international community can benefit from close cooperation and relations between the two Organizations.

As a regional arrangement under Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations, the OSCE is, among other things, a key instrument for post-conflict rehabilitation in its region. We welcome the ideas of the Lithuanian chairmanship to examine the OSCE role in stabilization, reconstruction and peacebuilding in more detail. The Secretary-General's report on peacebuilding in the immediate aftermath of conflict (S/2009/304) may be considered a pertinent underpinning for these deliberations and shows how the two organizations complement each other in their efforts.

To conclude, let me thank the Chairman-in-Office once again for his briefing and reiterate Germany's full support for the Lithuanian OSCE chairmanship.

Mr. Churkin (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We welcome the Chairman-in-Office of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Lithuania, Mr. Ažubalis, and thank him for his detailed briefing.

The Russian Federation is in favour of improving and comprehensively developing cooperation between the United Nations, the Security Council and regional and subregional arrangements, among which the OSCE holds an important place. Such cooperation should be based on the strong foundation of the Charter of the United Nations, in particular Chapter VIII, and take into due account the comparative advantages of the universal Organization and these mechanisms. There must be no doubt about the fact that it is the Security Council that holds the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security.

As set forth in the declaration of the OSCE Summit held in Astana, the basic mission of the Organization is to ensure equal and indivisible security for all member States. To that end, Russian President Dmitry Medvedev is pursuing an initiative aimed at the conclusion of a legally binding treaty on European security.

We agree with the OSCE Chairman-in-Office's assessment of the Geneva discussions on security and stability in the Transcaucasus, which are co-chaired by the European Union, the OSCE and the United Nations. That forum is an important platform for dialogue for Abkhazia, Georgia and South Ossetia. We agree on the importance of the full participation of a representative of the United Nations in this work. That was the objective of the decisions of the Secretary-General, in accordance with United Nations practice, to finance the Turunen group from the United Nations regular budget.

We welcome the activities of the OSCE Mission in Kosovo which, as the Minister mentioned, continues to carry out its mandate in the framework of resolution 1244 (1999) and in close cooperation with the United Nations Mission. We share his concern over incidents of illegal trading in human organs, and we fully support calls for an independent investigation. We believe that the OSCE Mission in Kosovo should provide assistance to such an international investigation.

With regard to resolving the situation in Afghanistan, we see the OSCE's role in curbing the illegal trade in Afghan narcotics as vital. Drug trafficking has been identified as a threat to international peace and stability in decisions of the Security Council and General Assembly. An important element here is the implementation of the OSCE framework for combating the illegal narcotics trade and trade in chemical precursors. The draft of that framework was put forward by Russia, together with Armenia, Belarus, Kyrgyzstan, the United States of America, Tajikistan and Turkey.

We welcome the intention of the Chairman-in-Office to establish cooperation with the African Union, the League of Arab States, the Conference on Interaction and Confidence-Building Measures in Asia, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations Regional Forum, and the Organization of American States. However, primary attention should be given to developing cooperation with influential regional organizations in areas under the direct responsibility of the OSCE, such as the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, the Collective Security Treaty Organization and the Eurasian Economic Community, which have useful experience and strong potential to help ensure peace and security.

In our view, the establishment of normative foundations for all its work is key to enhancing the OSCE's future effectiveness and to transforming it into an intergovernmental organization. Our proposals based on the OSCE Charter remain on the negotiation table. We hope that the vision for the work of the Lithuanian chairmanship set out today by Mr. Ažubalis will help to overcome the crisis mentality of recent years in the OSCE and adapt it to current realities.

Mrs. Ogwu (Nigeria): I, too, would like to welcome Foreign Minister Ažubalis to the Council and to congratulate him on assuming the chairmanship-in-office of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). We thank him in particular for his lucid and insightful briefing on the Organization's plans and priorities for 2011, and we wish him a very successful tenure.

The OSCE remains a key component of European security. Its importance for building strong and genuinely cooperative relationships among its 56 member States was quite evident from the briefing we have just heard this morning. We are pleased that the OSCE is not only making noteworthy progress as a regional organization, but also enhancing cooperation with the United Nations in the prevention, management and resolution of conflicts, in accordance with Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations. In this regard, we commend the collaboration between the OSCE and the United Nations Regional Centre for Preventive Diplomacy in Central Asia that facilitated the peaceful settlement of the 2010 inter-ethnic conflict in the Kyrgyz Republic. We also commend the close cooperation between the OSCE and the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo.

Nigeria welcomes the high priority that the Chairman-in-Office has placed on resolving protracted conflicts in the region, including the renewed Transdniestria settlement talks in the Republic of Moldova and the efforts to resolve the Nagorny Karabakh conflicts.

We also welcome the OSCE's efforts to promote cooperation in border security management in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan and the deployment of a good offices mission to defuse political tension in Albania. We believe that concrete results could be achieved within the Geneva international discussions framework, and that the United Nations experience in supporting regional conflict management will be invaluable in this process. We therefore support the Minister's requests for full-fledged United Nations representation at the Geneva discussions.

The emphasis Mr. Ažubalis placed on human rights, women's and civil society issues, freedom of the press and the promotion of democracy on the agenda of the OSCE deserves our encouragement, and indeed our broad support. Our expectation is that the Vilnius conference on journalistic freedom to be held in June will serve as an important platform to genuinely address the threats to journalistic freedom and consolidate the progress under way.

It is also our expectation that the relationship between Belarus and the OSCE will be restored on the basis of shared goals and anticipated mutual benefits. We believe that the OSCE efforts to promote tolerance through education and student-exchange agreements will guarantee long-term inter-ethnic harmony in the whole region.

Going forward, pressing challenges such as the ongoing tensions in South Ossetia, the pursuit of freedom of the press and the safety of journalists and the settlement of territorial disputes in the southern Caucasus region present the Lithuanian presidency with a unique opportunity to promote change in the region. To achieve this credibly, the organization must also address the stagnation in arms control, vigorously engage in Afghanistan and confront the challenges of energy security.

We share the Minister's commitment to effectively cope with transnational threats to international peace and security, such as human trafficking, drug trafficking and cyber security. Since transnational crimes are not limited to territorial boundaries, combating them requires complete cooperation. For this reason, we urge the OSCE to continue to create opportunities for cooperation and information exchanges with regional security agencies, including the Committee of Intelligence and Security Services of Africa.

We believe that the need for coordination between the United Nations and regional organizations in the fight against global security threats was a point that was vividly made by Mr. Ažubalis at last month's special meeting of the OSCE Permanent Council in Vienna, and indeed in today's briefing.

Nigeria believes that the vision that the Minister has outlined ensures a very promising future for the organization. It is a vision that will promote regional stability and international peace and security. Such an agenda advances the work of the Security Council, and is thus deserving of our support and endorsement. But the OSCE must strengthen its role in the region. It must retain its fundamental character as the most inclusive Atlantic forum for consultation and joint action.

Mr. Salam (Lebanon) (*spoke in Arabic*): I would like to welcome His Excellency Mr. Ažubalis and to thank him for his briefing, which was focused on strengthening cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations.

The authors of the United Nations Charter dedicated an entire chapter — namely, Chapter VIII — to the role of regional organizations and the maintenance of international peace and security. This is proof that the role of the United Nations complements the role of regional organizations — hence the importance of cooperation between these organizations aimed at taking advantage of their relative strengths.

Lebanon welcomes the efforts undertaken by the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) in the various conflicts in Europe and Asia with a view to establishing peace. The role of the OSCE is directly linked to conflicts that are within its area of competence and within its geographic area, and that have common cultural and historical elements.

All of this means that the OSCE has a particular understanding of the various events taking place in the region and can consider ways to resolve these conflicts through peaceful means. The OSCE today includes 56 member States, which can contribute to peace and security in three stages: before a conflict, through early warning and preventive diplomacy; during a conflict, with a view to reducing tensions and containing the conflict in order to settle it in a peaceful way; and after a conflict, to contribute to peacebuilding.

Lebanon calls on OSCE to attach particular importance to the rule of law, respect for human rights and the dialogue among cultures and religions, without neglecting efforts to combat terrorism, drug trafficking, human trafficking and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and small arms and light weapons, as such efforts have a positive impact on international peace and security.

Moreover, given their common objectives, Lebanon believes that it is necessary to strengthen cooperation between the OSCE and the United Nations Regional Centre for Preventive Diplomacy for Central Asia. It is also necessary to work with other regional organizations with a view to sharing information, experience and capacities. In this respect, we would highlight in particular the League of Arab States and the African Union, as these organizations can make very important contributions in the area of peace and security in the Arab world and Africa. Lebanon supports all efforts to strengthen international peace and security, given that this is the main objective of our Organization.

Mr. Osorio (Colombia) (*spoke in Spanish*): I would like to thank the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Lithuania and Chairman-in-Office of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), Mr. Audronius Ažubalis, for his statement. We believe his intervention included some very interesting perspectives on the OSCE's future and its cooperation with the United Nations.

Colombia would like to highlight the common identity and shared principles of our two organizations. We also share a vision of the essential nature of freedom, democracy and respect for human rights in efforts to maintain security.

Likewise, we believe that security, which is at the top of the list of the priorities of the Government of Colombia, is a prerequisite for the consolidation of the rule of law, peace and conflict prevention. We view security as a requirement for the effective enjoyment of citizen's liberties, sustainable development and the achievement of social prosperity under democratic precepts. In this context, we value the work of the OSCE as an example of the constructive potential of interregional, regional and subregional cooperation in promoting stability for nations and peoples.

In the context of respect for the principles and norms of international law, sovereignty and the self-determination of peoples, dialogue and cooperation at all regional levels can contribute to progress towards a safer and more harmonious world.

We also believe that the interaction between organizations of this type and the United Nations — and the Security Council in particular, in areas within its purview — promotes a better understanding of specific situations. Such exchanges promote comprehensive approaches to security issues by integrating human, political, economic, environmental and military elements specific to the regional dynamics.

With respect to cooperation with the United Nations, we welcome the contribution of the OSCE Mission in Kosovo to implementing the mandate of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo. We will have the opportunity to address that issue on the agenda tomorrow, but I believe it relevant to express appreciation for regional efforts to move ahead on areas of common interest, in accordance with the provisions of resolution 1244 (1999).

Furthermore, we applaud the firm commitment noted by the Minister of Lithuania to the role of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe in fighting terrorism. To the extent that regional areas resolutely support overall frameworks and strategies to address that transnational scourge in all its manifestations, we will be able to make more effective use of the relevant international instruments. Similarly, we note with interest the planned increase in OSCE support for actions led by the United Nations to stabilize Afghanistan with a view to countering, in coordination with national authorities, transnational threats that could emerge from that country's territory. Colombia takes this opportunity to express its solidarity with the Afghan people and to offer all relevant experience in fighting such threats.

In conclusion, I would like to underscore the importance of promoting smoother communication between OSCE and other regional organizations, including the Organization of American States, as the Minister mentioned. Prosperity, democracy and peace are the clear beneficiaries of dialogue and interregional agreement on the fundamental value of security.

Mr. Moraes Cabral (Portugal): I warmly welcome His Excellency Mr. Audronius Ažubalis, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Lithuania, and congratulate him on his assumption of the chairmanship-in-office of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). Let me assure the Minister that Portugal fully supports his efforts to promote the OSCE agenda, as well as Lithuania's endeavours to ensure that all three dimensions of the Organization's activities are taken forward in a balanced manner. I also thank the Minister for today's very comprehensive briefing outlining Lithuania's priorities for the OSCE in 2011.

Portugal feels encouraged by the follow-up process to the Astana Declaration, which will build on the productive discussions that came out of the Corfu process for a European security dialogue in the Euro-Atlantic and Eurasian regions. The Astana Final Declaration unequivocally confirms all dimensions of the OSCE acquis, and includes clear tasks aimed at further strengthening and defending the OSCE's legacy of a comprehensive, cooperative and indivisible concept of security, including by starting to work on an action plan.

Portugal warmly welcomes the OSCE chairmanship's intention to focus on concrete action, addressing regional issues, early warning, conflict prevention, arms control, and confidence- and security-building measures, as well as the economic and human dimensions. In that regard, I would like to emphasize the importance that Portugal attaches to the promotion of close cooperation between the OSCE and other international organizations.

We attach special importance to the added value that the United Nations and the OSCE can bring to each other's work in several regions. For example, the close cooperation between the OSCE and the United Nations Regional Centre for Preventive Diplomacy for Central Asia is vital to diffusing tensions in that complex region and deserves all our support.

Allow me to refer briefly to some of the main issues on the chairmanship's programme. All are relevant to further cooperation between the OSCE and the United Nations.

First, concerning the human dimension — a crucial component of the OSCE's comprehensive concept of security — we welcome the clear reiteration of fundamental commitments concerning the protection of human rights, fundamental freedoms, democracy and the rule of law, and the emphasis on their better implementation. That is a goal to which we attach great importance and that we are glad to see at the top of this year's OSCE priorities.

Secondly, we welcome the Lithuanian chairmanship's support for further work to solve the impasse in the field of conventional arms control in Europe and its commitment to moving forward with the improvement of the OSCE's important confidence- and security-building regime.

Thirdly, we are well aware of the threat to security that protracted, unresolved conflicts in the OSCE space continue to present. In fact, such conflicts continue to challenge the OSCE's objective of a stable, peaceful and prosperous Eurasian space. That is an area where United Nations-OSCE cooperation is both useful and indispensable, as the joint participation in the Geneva talks made clear.

Fourthly, the fight against transnational threats, such as terrorism and the trafficking in persons and drugs, as well as the welcome boost to the OSCE's profile in cybersecurity, are all areas where there has been a fair amount of consensus. And as threats evolve, so should the tools at our disposal to address them. Also in that context, interaction between the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and the OSCE has enormous potential. The jointly organized July 2010 conference on international cooperation on crime in Central Asia and Afghanistan is a case in point.

Fifth is the matter of non-proliferation in connection with the implementation of resolution 1540 (2004), with regard to which we can also explore forms of cooperation between the United Nations and OSCE.

May I also underline the concrete and focused contribution of the European Union to the OSCE's work in all of those areas, both conceptually and at the operational level, and always on the basis of solid support for the notion of comprehensive security. In that sense, we are especially pleased to see that in the coming two years, the organization will have two members of the European Union, Lithuania and Ireland, as its Chairs.

Finally, I would like to reaffirm Portugal's confidence in Lithuania's leadership. We will continue to support Lithuania, as Chair of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, in dealing with old and new challenges, as well as in strengthening cooperative relations between the OSCE and the United Nations.

Mr. Manjeev Singh Puri (India): I, too, would like to join my colleagues in thanking His Excellency Foreign Minister Audronius Ažubalis for his comprehensive briefing on the activities of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and its priorities in the months to come.

India supports the role of regional organizations in the maintenance of international peace and security and their cooperation with the United Nations under Chapter VIII of the Charter. Article 54 of the Charter enjoins such organizations to keep the Security Council fully informed of their activities in the maintenance of international peace and security. We therefore welcome the briefing by the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office.

Minister Ažubalis touched upon a wide canvas of issues, several concerning our immediate and extended neighbourhood. Naturally, they are of great interest to our delegation. We appreciate the work that the OSCE has been doing to promote security in its political, military, economic, environmental and human dimensions. It has addressed a wide range of security-related concerns, including arms control, confidence- and security-building measures, human rights, national minorities, democratization, policing strategies, counter-terrorism, and economic and environmental issues. They have significantly helped in managing and resolving some of the most significant problems in the post-Cold War world.

The countries of Central Asia and Eastern Europe have particularly benefited from the OSCE's cooperation. In the past decade or so, the OSCE has significantly expanded its activities in our neighbourhood under the Asian Partners for Cooperation and the Asian Contact Group. Annual conferences in areas such as human security, regional cooperation and comprehensive security in Central Asia, anti-trafficking and the implementation of OSCE confidence- and security-building measures in North-East Asia are important activities. The OSCE's cooperation with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations Regional Forum, of which India is a member, on matters related to confidence-building measures and preventive diplomacy is appreciable. We also welcome the OSCE's partnership with Afghanistan in border security management and its deployment of an election support team during the elections in that country.

We wish the OSCE great success in its efforts and activities to promote understanding and foster peace and security among its member and partner countries. We also extend our good wishes to the Lithuanian chairmanship of the OSCE, and personally to Foreign Minister Ažubalis. We hope that, under his stewardship, the OSCE will continue its important work.

Mr. Mashabane (South Africa): My delegation joins others in welcoming the Chairman-in-Office of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), Mr. Audronius Ažubalis, to the Security Council. We wish to thank him for his briefing on the work of the OSCE.

Last week, we received a briefing (see S/PV.6477) from the High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy of the European Union (EU) on the EU's cooperation with the United Nations, at which time we reiterated our strong view that cooperation between the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations in the area of peace and security was a major priority for us. We welcome all efforts in that regard.

Our support for such initiatives stems from our belief that multilateralism is strengthened through enhanced cooperation between the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations. Article 54 of Chapter VIII of the Charter, under which the OSCE is briefing the Council here today, envisaged strong cooperation between the Security Council and regional organizations in the maintenance of international peace and security.

We realize, however, that each regional organization is unique in terms of the challenges they face in maintaining international peace and security and the manner in which they address those threats. Moreover, we do not believe that efforts by regional organizations absolve the Council of its Charter-mandated responsibilities as the guardian of international peace and security. In fact, such efforts complement each other. The briefing we just received from the Chairman-in-Office confirms as much.

We have noted with appreciation the challenges that the OSCE helps to address, from Kosovo to Moldova, to Nagorny Karabakh and in Central Asia. We welcome the sharing of experiences between the OSCE and other regional organizations, in particular the African Union, and hope that such cooperation can be strengthened.

In conclusion, we would like to assure the OSCE of our support for all of those efforts.

Mr. Wang Min (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): I wish to thank Mr. Audronius Ažubalis, Foreign Minister of Lithuania, for his briefing on behalf of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE).

China attaches great importance to cooperation between the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations in the maintenance of international peace and security. In fulfilling its primary responsibility of maintaining international peace and security, the Security Council needs the important support and cooperation of regional and subregional organizations. In particular, the Council and those organizations should make use of their advantages and complement each other in a common effort to promote international peace and security.

The OSCE is an important regional organization in Europe in terms of maintaining international peace and security. It is also an important cooperative partner of the United Nations. We commend the contributions of the OSCE to preventive diplomacy, dispute mediation, post-conflict peacebuilding and counter-terrorism.

We encourage the OSCE to continue to make use of its advantages and to play a positive role in maintaining regional peace, security and stability. We also support the initiatives of the United Nations and the Security Council to cooperate more pragmatically and effectively with the OSCE, on the basis of the Charter of the United Nations, in the maintenance of regional peace and security.

Ms. Čolaković (Bosnia and Herzegovina): I would like to welcome the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Lithuania, Mr. Audronius Ažubalis, and thank him for his detailed and very comprehensive briefing. I would also like to extend our congratulations to him and his country on holding the chairmanship this year.

These regular briefings by the Chairman-in-Office of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) to the Council underscore the importance of an effective partnership between the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations in countering new and evolving threats to international security.

Building comprehensive and lasting security is a common strategic interest, and also one of the goals of the OSCE. With its 56 participating States, the OSCE is a broad-based and credible forum where each State maintains active relations based on its own interests. Such a forum has a number of political and diplomatic advantages, enabling States to resolve internal issues and those of shared concern.

Furthermore, member States can engage in dialogue on European security and cooperation on an equal footing. As for Bosnia and Herzegovina, we will continue to promote the same priorities in the work of the OSCE, focusing mainly on counter-terrorism, arms control, the protection of human rights and minorities, freedom of the media, human trafficking, corruption and all other forms of criminal activity.

In addition, we recognize and support the OSCE as a forum and an organization with a mandate for the early prevention of all conflicts. We are fully committed to actively contributing to the early prevention and neutralization of situations that could lead to conflict in the OSCE region.

Lastly, allow me to briefly reflect on the OSCE Summit held in Astana last December. The Summit only confirmed our awareness of the urgent problems that States are facing, including such transnational threats as terrorism and trafficking. We recognize that the OSCE is one of the adequate forums for analyzing those issues and finding solutions. The Summit also opened new paths for long-term cooperation among member States and set high expectations for important new decisions to facilitate such cooperation.

In addition, the adoption of the Astana Commemorative Declaration (see A/65/668) reconfirmed the OSCE's comprehensive approach to security, which is based on trust and transparency. Bosnia and Herzegovina strongly supports that approach and the joint initiatives of member States aimed at building a higher level of trust and strengthening security in Europe.

In conclusion, I would like to once again underline the importance and encourage further enhancement of cooperation between the OSCE and the United Nations, in accordance with Chapter VIII of the United Nations Charter.

Mr. Bonne (France) (*spoke in French*): I would also like to welcome to the Council Mr. Andronius Ažubalis, Chairman-in-Office of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Lithuania. We agree with the priority actions that he announced and we congratulate him on his attention to further strengthening the ties of cooperation between the United Nations and the OSCE.

The 56 participating States of the OSCE have the same goals in the areas of regional security, human and economic development and respect for human rights. The Astana Summit, held early in December 2010, reaffirmed those common objectives and created new avenues for cooperation.

The OSCE and the United Nations can be complementary in many areas, as Mr. Ažubalis has said. Transborder threats, the fight against organized crime, energy security, counter-terrorism, freedom of expression and freedom of the media are all challenges that are also engaging the United Nations. In addition, the Secretary General of the OSCE will present the OSCE's activities in the Security Council's Counter-Terrorism Committee next week, as a concrete example of exchange and cooperation on an issue of common interest.

Our two organizations also have much to exchange in order that their efforts in some regions are integrated. The Lithuanian Foreign Minister just mentioned Afghanistan, which is a neighbouring country to several OSCE participating States, where the organization is putting in place border-monitoring operations. In the Balkans, the OSCE continues to support the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo. Central Asia is also an important area of operations for the OSCE, which has five missions there. Its grasp of the local terrain has made it able to effectively respond to the crisis that shook Kyrgyzstan in June 2010, working with the United Nations and the European Union. The Lithuanian chairmanship would like to devote efforts to the fight against transborder threats in Central Asia. We support that regional initiative, which could be coordinated with efforts by specialized international institutions. We especially support strengthening cooperation with the United Nations conflict prevention centre.

However, the OSCE and the United Nations have seen some of their common efforts thwarted. For example, the missions of both the OSCE and the United Nations were forced to abandon Georgia after the war in the summer of 2008, even though their presence was bolstering stability. The situation in Georgia remains a source of concern, especially in

Abkhazia and South Ossetia, as well as in the whole Caucasus region. We therefore call upon all actors in the region to refrain from any action that might destabilize the current fragile equilibrium. We will pursue our efforts in the Geneva discussions to work towards a peaceful settlement of the Georgian dispute.

The situation in Belarus has also been a source of particular concern for us since the presidential elections in December. We have witnessed attacks on freedom of the press and on basic principles of democracy, with a number of opposition figures having been arrested. The decision of the Belarusian authorities to close the OSCE office in Minsk is contrary to the values of the organization, to which Belarus itself has agreed. Together we must therefore call upon that State to respect human rights, and more specifically civil and political rights.

The OSCE covers a vast area with shared values that should be preserved and strengthened. It represents a unique model of cooperation, based on the conviction that the security of Europe goes hand in hand with the promotion of human rights, democracy and the rule of law. In that connection, we welcome the Lithuanian chairmanship's commitment to promoting journalistic pluralism, to stopping hate crimes and to promoting human rights. Participating nations have undertaken significant commitments, such as protecting the territorial integrity of States, the peaceful settlement of disputes and rejection of recourse to the threat or use of force. We should all stand firm in those principles; indeed they are fundamental principles of our own Organization.

As an OSCE participant, we would like to see it develop ties with other regional organizations and international organizations, as well as with the European Union (EU). Cooperation with the EU is already very good and could be further strengthened. Like the OSCE, the European Union is indeed present in the Balkans, the Caucasus and Central Asia, where it plays an important role. Hundreds of European judges, police and other law enforcement officials have been deployed to the region to strengthen local capacity. The more interaction among different regional organizations — each with different experience and specific expertise — the more we can work together to be of use to countries that will benefit from our presence. We wish Lithuania a very successful chairmanship of the OSCE and we hope that we can continue to strengthen and deepen cooperation between our two organizations.

Mr. Moungara Moussotsi (Gabon) (*spoke in French*): I would like to join previous speakers in warmly welcoming to the Chamber Mr. Audronius Ažubalis, Chairperson-in-Office of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Lithuania. I would like to thank him for his detailed briefing, which outlines the priorities of the OSCE under his country's chairmanship. I would like to address two issues among the priorities of the Lithuanian chairmanship, namely, the resolution of protracted conflicts and strengthening the OSCE's response to transnational threats.

On the subject of the settlement of protracted conflicts, my delegation shares the view of the Chair of the OSCE, which is to move towards resolving those conflicts, on the one hand so as to prevent their protraction from contributing to instability and on the other hand to reduce the costs associated with their continuation. Along those lines, we welcome the efforts of the OSCE to re-launch the 5+2 format negotiations in order to resolve the conflict in Transdniestria in Moldova while respecting the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Republic of Moldova.

Strengthening regional organizations with a view to making them more operational and more able to confront various crises should remain among our top priorities. That is why we are pleased that the OSCE has taken that concern into account through its bodies, mechanisms and specialized institutions. Moreover, we believe that an early warning system to detect the early signs of potential conflict is part of a better way to prevent conflicts with untold human, material and financial consequences. We also agree with the Lithuanian chairmanship that an early warning system should be based on clear capacity and will to act promptly.

Accordingly, the mechanisms set up by some regional organizations, such as the Economic Community of Central African States, to prevent conflicts — particularly the Central African Early Warning System and the Peace and Security Council of Central Africa — would all benefit from the wealth of experience of the OSCE. Likewise, the African Standby Force, with its different components based in the five subregions of the continent, could in its operations rely on the expertise of the OSCE. We are encouraged by the commitment of the Lithuanian chairmanship to continue strengthening the cooperation of the OSCE and regional organizations of other regions of the world, such as the African Union.

The contribution of the OSCE to the efforts of the United Nations in promoting international peace and cooperation in its theatre of operations speaks for itself. The same is true for its commitment in Kosovo, Georgia and Afghanistan, to cite only those few examples. We welcome the focus of the Lithuanian chairmanship on continuing and strengthening its cooperation with the United Nations in combating other challenges to international peace and security, such as terrorism, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, organized crime and drug trafficking. In conclusion, we reiterate our support for the activities of the OSCE and the road map set forth by the Lithuanian chairmanship.

The President: I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the representative of Brazil.

I wish to welcome Minister Audronius Ažubalis and to thank him for his presentation. I congratulate him on assuming the chairmanship of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and wish him a very successful tenure.

Brazil is convinced that regional and subregional organizations can greatly contribute to further strengthening the multilateral system, including in the area of the maintenance of international peace and security. I am certain that, under the Lithuanian leadership, the OSCE will advance its dialogue and cooperation with the United Nations. Collaboration between the United Nations and the OSCE is a concrete example of a partnership that has helped to promote peace and security in Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia and to fight terrorism.

In Afghanistan, the OSCE has been actively involved in efforts to foster political dialogue, increase national capacities, and support the democratic process. Brazil notes with satisfaction the close coordination of OSCE with the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan in this regard. We appreciate the assistance provided to the Afghan Government in the fields of border security, police training and the fight against drug trafficking.

In Kyrgyzstan, the OSCE played a constructive role last year, in close coordination with the United Nations and the European Union, in the context of a challenging political environment. Brazil recognizes the work that was done, inter alia, to normalize the situation in the country, ensure security and stability, help the victims of violence, and assist the process of national reconciliation. With the active engagement of the international community, we hope that the people of Kyrgyzstan will be able to overcome current difficulties, strengthen democratic institutions, and create more opportunities for social and economic development.

I note the priorities outlined by Lithuania for its OSCE chairmanship in 2011. We were pleased to learn that, along with efforts to address protracted conflicts, attention will be given to a renewed commitment to democracy, the rule of law and human rights, as well as to new ways to promote energy security, media freedom and tolerance education. Tolerance and diversity are two defining features of Brazilian society. Having hosted last year's Forum of the Alliance of Civilizations in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil very much welcomes OSCE initiatives in this regard.

Brazil joins in supporting the vision and priorities established by Lithuania for the work of the OSCE in the current year, and looks forward to a very fruitful cooperation between that organization and the United Nations.

I now resume my functions as President of the Security Council.

I give the floor to Minister Ažubalis to respond to the comments made and questions raised.

Mr. Ažubalis: I sincerely thank all Council members for their unanimous support for our chairmanship programme. It is obvious that the consolidated political will of all nations concerned can move things along. I hope that the supportive statements made here today will be reflected in strong political will that will lead to concrete actions and help us to implement our programme.

The President: There are no further speakers inscribed on my list. The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The meeting rose at 11.35 a.m.

United Nations S/PV.6482

Security Council

Sixty-sixth year

Provisional

6482nd meeting

Wednesday, 16 February 2011, 3 p.m.
New York

President:	Mrs. Viotti	(Brazil)
Members:	Bosnia and Herzegovina	Mr. Vukašinović
	China	Mr. Li Baodong
	Colombia	Mr. Osorio
	France	Mr. Bonne
	Gabon	Mr. Moungara Moussotsi
	Germany	Mr. Berger
	India	Mr. Kumar
	Lebanon	Ms. Ziade
	Nigeria	Mr. Amieyeofori
	Portugal	Mr. Moraes Cabral
	Russian Federation	Mr. Churkin
	South Africa	Mr. Sangqu
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Quarrey
	United States of America	Mrs. DiCarlo

Agenda

The situation in Côte d'Ivoire

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room U-506.

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The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in Côte d'Ivoire

The President: Under rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I should like to invite the representative of Côte d'Ivoire to participate in this meeting.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

Members of the Council have before them document S/2011/75, which contains the text of a draft resolution submitted by France.

I shall put the draft resolution to the vote now.

A vote was taken by show of hands.

In favour:

Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brazil, China, Colombia, France, Gabon, Germany, India, Lebanon, Nigeria, Portugal, Russian Federation, South Africa, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America

The President: The draft resolution received 15 votes in favour. The draft resolution has been adopted unanimously as resolution 1968 (2011).

The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Council will remain seized of the matter.

The meeting rose at 3.15 p.m.

United Nations

S/PV.6483

Security Council

Sixty-sixth year

Provisional

6483rd meeting

Wednesday, 16 February 2011, 3.20 p.m.
New York

President:	Mrs. Viotti	(Brazil)
Members:	Bosnia and Herzegovina	Ms. Čolaković
	China	Mr. Li Baodong
	Colombia	Mr. Osorio
	France	Mr. Araud
	Gabon	Mr. Moungara Moussotsi
	Germany	Mr. Wittig
	India	Mr. Kumar
	Lebanon	Ms. Ziade
	Nigeria	Mr. Amieyeofori
	Portugal	Mr. Moraes Cabral
	Russian Federation	Mr. Churkin
	South Africa	Mr. Sangqu
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Sir Mark Lyall Grant
	United States of America	Mrs. DiCarlo

Agenda

Security Council resolutions 1160 (1998), 1199 (1998), 1203 (1998), 1239 (1999) and 1244 (1999)

Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (S/2011/43)

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Please recycle

The meeting was called to order at 3.20 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Security Council resolutions 1160 (1998), 1199 (1998), 1203 (1998), 1239 (1999) and 1244 (1999)

Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (S/2011/43)

The President: Under rule 37 of the Security Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representative of Serbia to participate in this meeting. On behalf of the Council, I welcome His Excellency Mr. Vuk Jeremić, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Serbia.

Under rule 39 of the Security Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite Mr. Lamberto Zannier, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo.

In accordance with the understanding reached in the Council's prior consultations, I shall take it that the Security Council agrees to extend an invitation under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure to Mrs. Vlora Çitaku.

It is so decided.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2011/43, containing the report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo.

I now give the floor to Mr. Lamberto Zannier.

Mr. Zannier: The report before the Council details the activities of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) from 19 October to 15 January 2010. Today, I wish to draw the Council's attention to the major events of the reporting period and subsequent developments, as well as to the principal challenges to security and stability in Kosovo and how we believe they can best be addressed.

Political instability and uncertainty have characterized the past three months in Kosovo. In December, the Kosovo authorities organized the first Assembly elections not held within the framework of resolution 1244 (1999) and in which UNMIK played no role. The day of the election passed without serious security incident. Kosovo Serb participation, except in the North, where it was negligible, was the largest since the general elections organized by UNMIK in 2001. However, local and international observers reported widespread irregularities and manipulation of votes. The Kosovo Supreme Court, the Election Complaints and Appeals Panel and the Central Elections Commission tried to address these problems, and voting was repeated in several municipalities. External observers, however, stated that irregularities persisted at some locations.

With the certification of the final results now behind them, Kosovo leaders are in the process of forming a new Government, which I hope will be sufficiently strong and stable to engage authoritatively in a substantive dialogue with Belgrade. I would also note the calls by various members of the international community — which I, personally, fully endorse — for Kosovo to have a Government with clean hands.

This period also saw the publication of a report by the Council of Europe's Parliamentary Assembly Special Rapporteur, Dick Marty, concerning allegations of organized criminal activities, including trafficking in human organs, by members of the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) in northern Albania in 1999. On 25 January, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe adopted a resolution calling for an investigation of allegations of inhuman treatment of people and illicit trafficking in human organs in Kosovo.

In my view, this Council of Europe report needs to be taken seriously and an investigation should be launched as a matter of priority in the interest of all. In this regard I cannot but urge all those with pertinent knowledge, including Mr. Marty, to make any and all evidence available to the competent investigating authority without delay. Of course, it is crucial that adequate protection be provided to all witnesses. I have discussed the matter with the Head of the European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo (EULEX), Mr. Xavier Bout de Marnhac, who has assured me that EULEX has the expertise and jurisdiction to handle the investigation under resolution 1244 (1999). My understanding is that EULEX would be ready to assume any responsibilities assigned to it in this matter.

For my part, I can only reiterate that UNMIK will give its full support to the investigating authority.

Beyond these issues, while the security situation in Kosovo has remained largely unchanged since the last reporting period and unresolved political issues continue to challenge Kosovo's long-term stability, I would like to draw the Council's attention to another problem that has become increasingly pressing. Mounting fiscal difficulties and the possible economic hardship they may cause could soon overshadow political differences as the greatest threat to Kosovo's stability.

The International Monetary Fund has warned that Kosovo can ill afford the implementation of recent campaign promises of substantial pay raises for teachers and other civil servants, which the Government has stated it intends to finance by enforcing tax revenue collection. However, the relatively low level of tax collection is just one of a number of economic difficulties facing the Kosovo authorities. The low level of foreign direct investment and high unemployment are also cause for concern. Kosovo faces a €1.8-billion trade deficit, and its exports amount to just 14 per cent of the value of imports. To add to Kosovo's economic troubles, the agreement with the European Union (EU) on preferential treatment of Kosovo goods has not yet been renewed.

Kosovo also suffers from the highest unemployment in the West Balkans, estimated by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) at almost 45 per cent, coupled with the lowest per capita gross domestic product (GDP) in the region. Dependency on the Kosovo diaspora, particularly among low-income members of the rural population is high. A recent UNDP study found that one in five households in Kosovo receive remittances from abroad, which amount to approximately 11 per cent of GDP.

Unresolved political issues are also contributing to Kosovo's economic challenges, as the Kosovo authorities seek to find a way of participating in regional economic mechanisms with non-recognizing States without UNMIK. In fact, UNMIK continues to facilitate Kosovo's presence in a variety of such regional forums, including the Central European Free Trade Agreement (CEFTA).

This year UNMIK/Kosovo has the rotating chairmanship of CEFTA, and intense consultations have taken place with all key stakeholders to find appropriate modalities to ensure the participation of all CEFTA members in this year's meetings. As signatories on behalf of Kosovo, our presence is required at CEFTA meetings; accordingly, UNMIK will engage to facilitate Kosovo's participation and ensure that the CEFTA process is not blocked. I urge all stakeholders to work towards finding solutions to the pressing economic problems facing Kosovo, and to rethink Kosovo's budget projections as quickly as possible in order to ensure that the population will not face undue and potentially destabilizing hardship.

The weak economic situation is doubtless one of the primary impediments to the returns process, but I am concerned regarding the chilling effect on returns of recent incidents of attacks on minority community returnees, including the recent assault on a Kosovo Serb in Istog/Istok municipality on 28 January, and the attack on a Kosovo-Egyptian couple by two Kosovo Albanian males in Deçan/Dečani municipality on 23 January. The municipal authorities have condemned these incidents, which Kosovo police are investigating. Still, every such incident can dissuade others from returning.

Unresolved issues in northern Kosovo continue to be a key challenge facing Kosovo's long-term stability, with the potential to influence the security and stability of the region. While security incidents have largely involved damage to property, this period was marked by the murder of a Kosovo Bosniak whose home in northern Kosovo was to be used as a polling station for the elections called by the Kosovo authorities. While police have yet to conclude their investigation, including in respect of alleged connections with organized crime networks, speculation that the murder may also have been intended to intimidate those who cooperate with the Kosovo institutions heightened tensions.

Opposition by northern Kosovo Serbs to engagement with the Kosovo institutions continues. Recently, protesters gathered to prevent the inauguration of a newly renovated park and playground in northern Mitrovica, sponsored by the United States Agency for International Development and the Kosovo authorities' northern Mitrovica municipal planning team, forcing the cancellation of the ceremony.

UNMIK continues to engage closely on a daily basis with northern Kosovo's communities. Such engagement, and continuing consultation and coordination with all relevant stakeholders, are essential in northern Kosovo. However, I have to point out that, contrary to last year, the municipality in southern Mitrovica has chosen not to engage in a process of consultations to manage the next phase of the reconstruction of houses for Kosovo Albanian returnees to northern Kosovo. That may lead to instability on the ground. In addition, Pristina-based media have continued to single out members of my staff in northern Kosovo on the basis of their nationality, thereby exposing them to potential security risks.

Nevertheless, UNMIK will continue to attempt to engage in proactive mediation between the communities and to act as a link between the leaders in northern Kosovo and the Pristina authorities, along with promoting economic development and stability in close cooperation with the United Nations Kosovo Team, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and our other partners on the ground.

We hope that the planned census in Kosovo will be able to proceed as scheduled. The United Nations Office for Project Services, as a status-neutral entity, has agreed to conduct the census north of the Ibër/Ibar River. However, in recent weeks there have been calls by representatives of the Serbian Ministry for Kosovo and Metohija for Kosovo Serbs to boycott the census. In my view, such calls risk harming the long-term welfare of Kosovo's residents, regardless of ethnicity. I urge all parties to recognize the value that a long-overdue census can contribute to the wellbeing of Kosovo's inhabitants, and ensure that the census takes place on the basis of procedures fully compatible with resolution 1244 (1999).

There will be no long-term stability and development of Kosovo without a successful process of reconciliation among the communities. There is therefore a pressing need to launch the dialogue between Belgrade and Pristina and to work towards establishing viable cooperation and lasting peace and security. Issues of missing persons and sustainable returns of internally displaced persons and refugees can also be most effectively addressed through dialogue between the parties. Belgrade has stressed its readiness to begin the EU-facilitated dialogue called for by the General Assembly, the beginning of which has been delayed as a result of the political instability in Kosovo over the past few months. Now that the formation of a new Government appears imminent, I welcome statements that the authorities in Pristina will also be ready to engage in this important process. We in UNMIK remain committed to continue working closely with the EU in bringing this process forward.

On behalf of all UNMIK staff, I wish to thank the Council for its continued support, and to reiterate our assurance that we will continue to implement the mandate with which it has entrusted us. For our part, we remain firmly committed to continue operating to the best of our ability so as to ensure lasting peace and stability in Kosovo.

The President: I thank Mr. Zannier for his briefing.

I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Vuk Jeremić.

Mr. Jeremić (Serbia): I would like to thank you very much, Madame President, for convening this meeting of the Security Council on Kosovo pursuant to resolution 1244 (1999).

I welcome the presence of Special Representative Lamberto Zannier. The United Nations remains a crucial actor in the province. We believe it is critical for all responsible stakeholders on the ground, together with the Security Council, to reaffirm support for the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) as an indispensable pillar of peace and stability.

At the outset of my remarks, I would like to reaffirm my Government's position on the unilateral declaration of independence by the ethnic-Albanian authorities of our southern province of Kosovo and Metohija. For us, it is null and void. We do not, and we shall not, recognize Pristina's self-declared independence, explicitly or implicitly. This is mandated by the democratic will of the people of Serbia and enshrined in our Constitution. A substantial majority of United Nations Member States, and of those seated on the Security Council, continue to respect Serbia's sovereignty and territorial integrity, in accordance with the basic principles of the United Nations Charter and the Helsinki Final Act.

On behalf of my nation, I would like to reiterate our deep gratitude for their support and solidarity. We urge them to maintain their principled position with regard to the separatists, thus ensuring that unilateral attempts to impose outcomes to ethnic and territorial disputes are not legitimized, and thereby preventing Kosovo's unilateral declaration of independence from becoming a dangerous and destabilizing precedent for the world community. It will also help to maintain a healthy international environment within which the long-awaited dialogue between Belgrade and Pristina, which the world supported by acclamation last September, can take place.

I want to emphasize that Serbia remains strongly committed to those talks, despite delays in getting them off the ground. We share the Secretary-General's assessment contained in the report before the Council today (S/2011/43) that the dialogue is a valuable opportunity to resolve long-standing issues, which would contribute significantly to the consolidation of peace, stability and reconciliation in Kosovo and throughout the region.

Last autumn, the Republic of Serbia announced that it was ready to start the dialogue. We are still waiting for Pristina. We hope that they too will be ready soon. There will be many issues to discuss, and some of them will be complicated. As we move forward, we should strive to build trust and understanding. Results will surely come, if the parties demonstrate good faith and work hard to achieve constructive arrangements that would benefit all the residents of the territory. That could pave the way for what the dialogue should ultimately produce, namely, a transformative peace between Serbs and Albanians throughout our region.

My country is dedicated to solving all differences at the negotiating table. We welcome the opportunity presented by the dialogue. We intend to make the most of it, just as we reasonably expect other parties to do the same. It is therefore critically important that no one try to alter realities on the ground while discussions get under way. Numerous reports by the Secretary-General have warned us of that danger, including the one before us today.

The province's ethnic-Albanian authorities continue to encourage illegal construction of new, or the expansion of existing, housing settlements — a direct challenge to the authority of the UNMIK Administration Mitrovica. They also seem to be intent on extending the reach of the Pristina-based institutions to North Kosovo, against the will of the local population. Serbia remains deeply concerned by these and other provocative actions, which cannot contribute to peace and stability in North Kosovo and which could dramatically, and perhaps fatally, undermine the dialogue.

That is one of the many reasons that the United Nations reporting function remains indispensable. Serbia welcomes the Secretary-General's commitment, as stated in today's report, to keep the Security Council informed of all developments in the dialogue. The Council's leading role in determining, and providing legitimacy to, a comprehensive settlement is indispensable, in accordance with resolution 1244 (1999) and the Council's primary responsibility to maintain international peace and security, as assigned to it by the Charter of the United Nations.

The United Nations status neutrality and that of all organizations that operate under its overall authority — such as the Kosovo Force (KFOR), the European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo (EULEX) and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) Mission in Kosovo — remain the only acceptable framework within which all of us can work together to improve the lives of ordinary people in Kosovo, irrespective of their ethnicity.

UNMIK's principled commitment to the external representation function for Kosovo — its obligation under resolution 1244 (1999) — is highly appreciated. We are deeply concerned, however, at the "lack of enthusiasm" by the province's ethnic-Albanian authorities on this issue. Today's report reconfirms that Pristina refuses to attend a number of regional and international meetings for which UNMIK's facilitation is required. This includes sessions of the Regional Cooperation Council, as well as the Central European Free Trade Agreement, which UNMIK, as the signatory to this free trade agreement on behalf of Pristina, is slated to chair throughout 2011.

We hope that Pristina will come to embrace the constructive approach offered by UNMIK. As the report underlines, their current stance "will directly affect Kosovo's economic and social development". (*S/2011/43, para. 47*) It will also affect how seriously rules are taken by the region's democracies. The question of UNMIK's facilitation cannot be separated from the necessity for all to adhere to the terms of treaties and legally binding agreements. No one in the Western Balkans — or, for that matter, in the wider world — should be permitted simply to ignore established procedures or attempt to unilaterally impose new ones. For change to be legitimate, agreement is required. Until one is established, the consistent adherence to existing working arrangements is the only way to ensure that regional cooperation continues to improve and stability is strengthened.

The report before us draws attention to the small number of internally displaced persons (IDPs) returns by non-ethnic Albanians. For this reporting period, the number of Kosovo Serbs exercising their right of return is estimated to be around 120, out of the total 205,835 expelled since June 1999, according to the figures of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). The consistently low number of returning IDPs is in line with the September 2010 Amnesty International report that states that Amnesty International, UNHCR and other international organizations "do not consider that conditions for the sustainable return for Serbs currently exist in Kosovo". The same document concludes that the situation at present, and for the long term, is both unstable and uncertain. This represents a failure of monumental proportions.

I would like to remind the Council that the Republic of Serbia has repeatedly urged stakeholders to focus on the central humanitarian issue of internally displaced persons. I hope that a way can be found to empower Kosovo Serb IDPs to exercise their right of return immediately and unconditionally.

The Secretary-General's report underscores recent developments in Serbian cultural and religious heritage issues in the province. We appreciate UNMIK's critical role in facilitating activities in Kosovo of both UNESCO and the Council of Europe-led Reconstruction and Implementation Commission. The Commission was established in the wake of the March 2004 pogrom, which resulted in the destruction of 35 Serbian Orthodox Church holy sites over a three-day period. Despite a number of successful projects, the Commission has still not completed its work in the province. We urge all potential donor countries to contribute to the next round of funding for the Commission, so that its valuable contribution to the reconstruction of destroyed Serbian churches and monasteries may be completed.

The report refers both to the 26 December enthronement of His Grace Teodosije as Bishop of Raška-Prizren and all of Kosovo and Metohija, as well as to the fact that the Orthodox Christmas Day liturgy took place in the same church less than a fortnight later. On each of those occasions, held in the ancient Serbian capital city of Prizren, representatives of other religious communities in Kosovo were in attendance. We welcome this and other inter-faith contacts, and we appreciate UNMIK's continuing encouragement thereof. We also appreciate the commitment of the Kosovo Force (KFOR) to maintaining a static presence at some of our most important holy sites, including the Dević Monastery, as well as the Visoki Dečani Monastery and the Patriarchate of Pejë/Peć, which both remain on the UNESCO List of World Heritage in Danger.

By noting the desecration of a number of Serbian holy sites during the reporting period, the report once more draws our attention to what can happen as KFOR downsizes. Unfortunately, the report provides no details of these hate crimes, nor does it indicate the arrest of any perpetrators. The culture of impunity for attacks on places that represent the core of Serbian national identity continues unabated. We call on all relevant authorities to make it a priority to investigate these distressing incidents.

The roots of democracy have not taken hold in Kosovo. Today's report presents the findings of the United Nations Development Programme's 2010 democratization index for Kosovo, which concludes that "democratic processes in Kosovo do not fulfil democratic standards" (*ibid., para. 10*). This is consistent with the results of the 2011 Map of Freedom put out by Freedom House, which does not classify Kosovo as an electoral democracy.

It is in that context that the controversial results of the recently held elections by the ethnic-Albanian authorities in Pristina should be examined. As the report of the Secretary-General makes clear, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General "did not call the elections, which were not organized within the framework of resolution 1244 (1999), and will not certify the results" (*ibid., para. 4*).

By all accounts, the election was deeply flawed, in spite of the presence of an average of 14 observers at each polling station, according to the report. Several re-votes and recounts were required. The European Parliament's election monitoring delegation to Kosovo stated, according to today's report, that "serious shortcomings underscored insufficient political will, including at the grass-roots level, to conduct a genuine election in line with international standards and good electoral practices" (*ibid., para. 9*).

The report also references the overall conclusion of the European Network of Election Monitoring Organizations: "a high number of irregularities during the Kosovo Assembly elections have severely affected the trust in the democratic process in Kosovo" *(ibid., para. 9*). That is all the more regrettable given the higher standard of achievement in previous election cycles — that is to say, when they were conducted with the full support of all stakeholders and in line with resolution 1244 (1999). The report expresses concern that the security situation in Kosovo is potentially volatile and that the

> "number of murders, cases of unauthorized possession of weapons, and shooting incidents remained significant. Organized crime continued to be of concern throughout Kosovo, mainly involving smuggling and narcotics trafficking" (*ibid., para. 21*).

The report does not provide details, however. Nor does it focus on contemporary cases related to the smuggling of human organs. Only Annex I of the report mentions the multiple indictments handed down in the Medicus case, which is an alleged organized criminal conspiracy to source human organs for illicit transplant. Some of those who are suspected of involvement in this affair are also mentioned in a deeply disturbing report approved by the Council of Europe Parliamentary Assembly on 25 January, entitled "Inhuman treatment of people and illicit trafficking in human organs in Kosovo". That report is based on a number of testimonial accounts and what are characterized as the compelling findings of a number of European intelligence and law enforcement agencies, together with analysis produced for NATO. It is particularly disturbing that, as far back as 1999, to quote from the report, "international actors chose to turn a blind eye to the war crimes of the KLA, placing a premium instead on achieving some degree of short-term stability". The report concludes by saying that "certain crimes committed by members of the KLA, including some top KLA leaders, were effectively concealed and have remained unpunished".

That report states that the so-called Kosovo Liberation Army Drenica Group engaged in money-laundering and the smuggling of drugs, cigarettes and weapons, as well as human trafficking, and that it bears primary responsibility for the fate of many hundreds of kidnapped civilians. The report goes on to state that the abductees were sent from Kosovo to secret detention camps in Northern Albania, where many of them were singled out for forced surgery before being murdered. Their internal organs were extracted and sold on the international black market. The report indicates that those events took place before, during and after the 1999 armed conflict in Kosovo.

The report explicitly identifies Hashim Thaci, Kosovo's sitting prime minister, as the group's leader, and lists a number of prominent personalities, including Xhavit Haliti, Azem Syla and Fatmir Limaj, as having "played vital roles as co-conspirators in various categories of criminal activity". It also identifies one of Hashim Thaci's current close advisors, Shaip Muja, as a leading co-conspirator in the trafficking of human organs.

For justice to be done, a full and independent criminal investigation of the reported allegations is essential. Such an investigation must be internationally mandated as well as internationally accountable. It must also be able to provide an effective witness protection and relocation programme to guarantee credible testimony by all. This is an acute problem in Kosovo, for, as the report authors highlighted, "fear, often to the point of genuine terror" was observed "in some of our informants as soon as the subject of our inquiry was broached".

No existing institution on its own has the mandate or the temporal and territorial jurisdiction to carry out a serious investigation that would be comprehensive in scope. This includes EULEX.

I want to be clear on the following point: the contribution of EULEX to uncovering what took place inside Kosovo itself will be crucial. That alone will not be sufficient, however, because EULEX cannot operate outside Kosovo, while the relevant allegations appear to encompass not only that territory, but various United Nations Member States in Europe, Asia and Africa. A single authority must ultimately coordinate the investigation process, manage the jurisdictional issues and ensure the proper administration of justice.

It is the position of the Republic of Serbia that the solution lies in establishing an ad hoc investigating mechanism created by and accountable to the Security Council. This has been the case in all previous instances involving war crimes in the Balkans, whichever side the perpetrators belonged to and irrespective of their political role. It is only through the action of the Security Council that we can prevent the onset of a perception of double standards in the administration of international justice. Maintaining a coherent approach on the issue of war crimes is an essential component in the common effort to consolidate peace and stability in the Balkans.

The final words of the Council of Europe report state that its sole aim today is to act on behalf of those men and women who, regardless of their ethnic or religious backgrounds, simply aspire to the truth and to an end to scandalous impunity, with no greater wish than to be able to live in peace. That statement serves to frame what Serbia asks of the Security Council — to ascertain the veracity of the allegations outlined in the report and, should the evidence warrant it, bring all the culprits to justice. We do not expect the discussion in this Chamber to be concluded this afternoon. In our view, today is the start of a shared effort to reach a consensus on how to decisively address these heinous contentions. Serbia intends to actively participate in this process.

I want to make it clear that for us, the question of human organs trafficking is an ethical and human rights issue of the first order. We have to make sure it is not portrayed as an attempt to assign communal blame. There is no such thing as the guilt or innocence of an entire nation. Guilt, like innocence, is not collective, but personal.

We believe that the imperative to conduct a proper investigation must neither be politicized, nor linked to diplomatic disagreements over Kosovo. It must be ultimately put in the service of truth and reconciliation. Its successful completion is a prerequisite for lasting peace and will represent the final repudiation of the policies that promoted extrajudicial killing, ethnic cleansing and the criminalization of a society.

The President: I now give the floor to Mrs. Vlora Çitaku.

Mrs. Çitaku: Let me initially express gratitude to the Council for giving me the opportunity to inform the Council firsthand about developments in the last three months in the Republic of Kosovo, as well as provide the Council with the observations of the government of the Republic of Kosovo regarding current political developments. I wish to congratulate, in alphabetical order, the new Security Council members: Colombia, Germany, India, Portugal and South Africa.

I am addressing the Council today in this very distinguished room, where history has unfolded and where nations are protected, on the eve of the third anniversary of the declaration of independence of Kosovo, an event that marked the birth of a new country in the European continent. I thank the members of the Council, the Secretary-General of the Organization and all his successive Special Representatives, including Mr. Lamberto Zannier, for the role they have played in helping our region achieve long-lasting peace by strengthening the democratic and multiethnic institutions of a free and democratic Kosovo.

It is a suitable moment to remind ourselves where we are today, three years after the democratically elected representatives of the people of Kosovo came together to fulfil the will of the people and declare independence. Since that day, three years ago, the Kosovo Government has implemented the critical provisions of the Ahtisaari Plan, the comprehensive proposal of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General, in full accordance with the established international law and Security Council resolutions, as was determined by the landmark advisory opinion on the legality of Kosovo's declaration of independence, issued in July 2010 by the International Court of Justice at the request of Serbia.

This was a giant final step in the long and torturous process of defining Kosovo's final status, and it came not a moment too soon, for it has not been easy at all to be living in Kosovo in the last few decades. We should never forget that Milošević first began his campaign of terror in Kosovo in 1989, and it is in Kosovo that he ended, in the most tragic way imaginable, his plan for a greater Serbia, taking the lives of thousands of innocent people. This is now an established historical fact, as the world has witnessed and as finally documented in the verdicts of the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia in The Hague, making us, the people of Kosovo, the subject of quintessentially unjust rule for decades.

All oppressed people and nations around the globe know what the feeling of liberation, freedom and dignity is. Just to mention one prominent and exemplary case, the people of South Africa know what the feeling of freedom is, after apartheid. Therefore it is easy to understand how we Kosovars were suffering in those years and how we feel nowadays.

I am speaking here on behalf of the Kosovo government, as we have always done here, in an open, frank and transparent way. We have experienced challenging times during the last couple of months. As you may recall, the Constitutional Court of Kosovo ruled that the former president, Mr. Fatmir Sejdiu, was in breach of the country's Constitution, which made him promptly resign, in full respect of the procedures in place. This development affected the political equilibrium and led to early elections.

Candidates for ministers of Parliament engaged in a lively electoral campaign, sometimes at the edge of fair play. Notwithstanding attacks against election officials in the north of Kosovo, international monitors reported a calm and remarkably peaceful campaign and voting day. Furthermore, over 200 complaints were submitted to elections bodies by all political parties and civil society organizations, and those were addressed in record time. Revotes were ordered in several municipalities, including a manual recounting of suspected ballot boxes where needed. All procedural and legal steps were lawfully followed and respected, in a system of checks and balances, in order to make sure that complaints were properly addressed and the will of the people respected. It is of paramount importance to point out that throughout the entire process, the system functioned: the state delivered its services and the appropriate budgetary procedures of a caretaker government were strictly observed.

We political representatives and leaders of Kosovo have very attentively listened to and taken due note of all critiques and suggestions made by our friends and partner regarding the electoral process. This represents an important moment of thoughtful reflection in our endeavours to strengthen our institutions and democracy. Above all, it should be stressed that the citizens of Kosovo are firmly establishing themselves as an energetic, stable and forward-looking society where individual freedoms are respected and institutions function in the interest of all the citizens of Kosovo, irrespective of their ethnic or religious background.

At the end of the process, all political parties in Kosovo have accepted the final results. Yesterday, an agreement to form a new Government was reached among several political parties, including representatives of the minorities, providing the institutions of Kosovo with full political and legal clout.

Another issue was current in the media during the reporting period, which I would like to address clearly. The Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe recently approved a report written by a Swiss parliamentarian, Mr. Dick Marty, alleging that senior political leaders of Kosovo — but not only of Kosovo — had engaged in organ harvesting. Free with its imagination but failing to provide any proof whatsoever, the Marty report further claims that senior NATO, European Union (EU) member States and United States officials had knowledge of and tolerated this alleged wrongdoing.

Appalled, the Government of Kosovo has clearly and firmly rejected the allegations in Mr. Marty's report. Besides profoundly hurting the feelings of every Kosovar, the report has also, regrettably, harmed our international reputation. It is worth recalling that the allegations in the report are not new. They have already been subject to international investigation, in particular by the International Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY), the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo and, most recently, by the European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo (EULEX). We welcome the input of international experts, such as recent statements by former ICTY Chief Prosecutor Sir Geoffrey Nice, that question the legal arguments put forth by Mr. Marty.

That being said, the Government of Kosovo wishes to reaffirm its official stance that, in the light of the severity of the allegations, it will insist on a prompt launch of a thorough investigation by EULEX prosecutors on the ground. EULEX, entrusted by the United Nations and the EU to support the local judicial system, has the expertise, the resources, the prosecutors and the judges to thoroughly investigate the allegations put forth. We will give it our full cooperation.

But no mistake should be made and no confusion should be tolerated. The war in Kosovo did not happen centuries ago. It happened 11 years ago, before the eyes of the whole world. No report can change or reconstruct artificially a well-known and clearly documented situation between oppressor and oppressed. Blurring that distinction does not correspond to reality; it does not help truth; it does not serve the process of justice and reconciliation. The people of Kosovo, more than anyone, need and demand investigations since we have nothing to hide. The same clear, firm and unambiguous stance has been expressed by the Government of Albania.

With regard to the integration of minorities into Kosovo's society and institutions, we are happy to report significant progress during the reporting period. A substantial number of Serb voters participated in the national elections. There was, for the first time, a much higher participation of the Serb community in elections organized by the Kosovo authorities than in those organized by the Serb illegal structures. The Serbs won over 10 per cent of all parliamentary seats, becoming an essential part of the Government. The minority communities won 25 seats, or over 20 per cent of the seats in Parliament. For the first time in Kosovo's young democratic history, a Serb politician will soon become a Deputy Prime Minister.

The success of decentralization and the acceptance by the majority community of the constitutional mechanisms that protect minorities represent a success that cannot be disputed. New municipalities have been established and, with the help of the international community, are being equipped to serve their inhabitants with the newly decentralized powers.

The Republic of Kosovo is in the process of organizing the first population census since 1981, with the help of the international community and the support of Eurostat. The census will take place in April. It is fundamentally important that we see the positive trend of Serb participation in local institutions continue and become active in the forthcoming census. Special provisions and additional questionnaires have been developed with the help of Eurostat to account for Kosovar refugees from all communities who no longer reside in Kosovo. We urge the international community to call for the full participation of the Serb community in the process. This is especially important in northern Mitrovica, where we need to see legal and authoritative bodies emerge out of democratic processes, with institutions that operate within the framework of the Kosovo Government.

Back in 2005, during months of talks in Vienna, good will provided unprecedented local authority for the Serb minority. They are now using these rights in all of Kosovo, except in northern Mitrovica, where the political landscape has become a hostage to parallel structures that are involved, as is widely known and recognized, in crime and smuggling. According to United Nations estimates, we are losing at least €40 million annually due to illegal smuggling across border crossings 31 and 1. We expect Serbia to honour its pledge to fight crime and corruption by assisting EULEX and the Government of Kosovo in re-establishing the same principle of integrated tax collection operations in effect at Kosovo's other border points with Serbia and its neighbours.

While we have taken note of the concerns expressed by Special Representative Zannier regarding the position of United Nations administration in Mitrovica, we would like to remind everyone that Kosovo taxpayers, through the Government of Kosovo, currently pay well over 50 per cent of the entire United Nations operational budget in Mitrovica, contributing greatly to the United Nations presence on the ground and acting as an important supporting pillar. We are also insistent that the current status-neutral position of the United Nations means exactly what it says — that the United Nations does not exclude the right of Kosovo to be called and recognized as a State. Sometimes, this point is not clear on the ground.

I have an appeal to make to the Republic of Serbia today. It is not what it would have normally been if Serbia were mature enough to make the grand gesture of complying with reality and recognizing Kosovo, thereby ensuring the opening of a new chapter in the Balkans. It is a much more modest appeal for Serbia to respect the very framework under which Kosovo operates as a State, including the Security Council's resolutions.

For example, the United Nations Mission in Kosovo has licensed two operators of mobile phone services under the 2004 United Nations-promulgated law on telecommunications. Any other operations run by Serbian authorities are hence illegal under international law. Serbia's insistence on keeping mobile operations in Kosovo is in blatant disregard of resolution 1244 (1999).

Similarly, Kosovar authorities have the inherent authority to issue automobile license plates in the cities of Kosovo. The Serbian authorities have not had that right since 1999. Serbia simply cannot hope to continue issuing, hundreds of miles away in Belgrade, plates for vehicles in Kosovo's cities.

In the case of airspace, the Kumanovo Agreement and subsequent decisions of the United Nations and EU airspace regulatory bodies have given Kosovo full rights of control over its airspace. All of Kosovo's neighbours, barring Serbia, and all international airlines accept that fact. Serbia continues to ban flights originating in Kosovo from entering Serbian airspace, again disregarding the majority of the main points of resolution 1244 (1999) and the International Court of Justice opinion.

There are many other points of discussion ahead of us, for which we need the Serbian Government to adopt a new and realistic approach. It must recognize the basic truth that Kosovo is in fact a nation separate from Serbia. It needs to establish many modes of communication with Kosovo, as an equal partner, to uncover the truth about the missing of the war and to address such issues as the fight against crime, the provision of health care, education, sports, culture and heritage. The Government of Kosovo looks forward to engaging in meaningful talks with the Government of Serbia in the immediate future on all of those important issues, with the facilitation of the European Union.

The security situation in Kosovo is stable. As a result of the steadily improving security situation, the Kosovo Force has pursued its plan to reduce troop levels, which will drop to a low of 5,000. When we remember 1999 and the massive military-humanitarian operation that involved over 70,000 international troops and civilian personnel, we realize how far we have come in turning Kosovo into a success story for the United Nations and the international community.

Although Kosovo was confronted with the task of having to prove the solidity of its institutions in overcoming a political crisis and organizing early elections, I am pleased to reiterate that it has not affected the continuing international recognition of Kosovo as an equal member of the community of nations. Since my most recent report, five other States Members of the United Nations have recognized Kosovo as an independent and sovereign State. I take this opportunity to thank the Governments of Kiribati, Tuvalu, Qatar, Guinea-Bissau and Oman. This only proves that the process is irreversible and remains the only legal and politically sustainable way for all of us to move forward with our agenda of development and Euro-Atlantic integration.

Being so preoccupied with the bad news, we sometimes forget that life continues in Kosovo and the Balkans. We are no longer concerned with issues of life and death, but rather with the more prosaic problems typical of a society in transition. In fact, our reports to international stakeholders are increasingly about issues of true importance, such as electing better leaders, having a free media, stopping corruption, fighting organized crime and securing a social support network for the neediest, and less about status and borders. Therein lies the opportunity before us. Both Serbia and Kosovo want to become members of the EU. We must do so because our peoples are asking that of us.

The process of establishing clear, transparent and measurable benchmarks for progress in internal reforms and neighbourly relations will drive the dialogue between the Republic of Serbia and the Republic of Kosovo. We have already seen the necessary adjustment when the Government of Serbia submitted the new text of General Assembly resolution 64/298 accepting the opinion of the International Court of Justice. The Kosovar Government will competently and credibly advance our EU agenda and deliver on the promises we made in the election campaign. We expect the Serbian Government to take the necessary final step and accept Kosovo as a partner on an equal footing.

The upcoming dialogue affords Kosovo and Serbia a unique opportunity. We in Kosovo see that dialogue not as an end goal, but as an instrument to establish a new foundation in the region. We cannot and will not change history; it is unfolding. We cannot and should not forget or erase the past, but perhaps we can learn a lesson from it on what should never happen again. We cannot change our geography. Kosovo and Serbia will be living next to each other as immediate neighbours for eternity. But we can change the future and the legacy we will leave behind for our children. It is in our hands now to make sure that they inherit from us a peaceful and prosperous region. That will require commitment and leadership in both countries. I am here to assure the Security Council that Kosovo is ready.

Ms. Ziade (Lebanon) (*spoke in Arabic*): I would like to thank Mr. Zannier for his briefing. I would also like to welcome the Serbian Foreign Minister, Mr. Vuk Jeremič, and thank him for his statement. My thanks also go to Ms. Vlora Çitaku for her statement.

My delegation welcomes the efforts of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) to facilitate dialogue and reconciliation among the parties concerned. We urge UNMIK to pursue its efforts to maintain security and stability, facilitate Kosovo's participation in regional and international forums, and assist in responding to the social needs of the different groups, particularly in the north, in coordination and cooperation with local and international parties.

On the basis of the Mission's constructive role, we urge all parties to extend to UNMIK the support it needs to implement its mandate. We also urge them not to publish inaccurate information on the Mission's activities, which only obstructs its work and jeopardizes the safety of its staff. We also welcome the continuing coordination between UNMIK and the European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo, pursuant to the principle of neutrality set forth in resolution 1244 (1999).

We welcome the relatively calm security situation, but persistent efforts must be made to combat organized crime, which, according to the Secretary-General's report (S/2011/43), continues to be a source of concern in different parts of Kosovo.

The situation in the north of the country is also still fragile. Harassment and security incidents continue to foster a climate of tension and mistrust among various groups. In those circumstances, it is important for security forces to provide the maximum level of security for all citizens of all regions. All parties must refrain from provocative acts that could disturb the peaceful coexistence.

Security, trust and respect for diversity are the basic elements needed in addressing the issue of refugees. Ensuring those conditions would create a positive climate that would in turn pave the way for dignified and safe returns. While returns increased in 2010, the rate is still low.

On a different issue, we would like to express our regret about the irregularities in the recent parliamentary elections, which affected the confidence in the democratic process in Kosovo, despite the partial redress of those irregularities by the re-vote in a number of polling stations. The increased percentage of Kosovo Serbs residing south of the Ibar river who participated in those elections represented an important positive development.

At this stage, it is important to focus on forming a Government that reflects the aspirations of the population and can improve its standard of living. We also hope that the momentum of General Assembly resolution 64/298, adopted on 9 September 2010, will serve to facilitate a truly frank and constructive dialogue between Belgrade and Pristina as soon as possible. It must be accompanied by efforts to achieve reconciliation and to establish confidence among the parties in Kosovo, allowing them to feel the benefits of such a proposed dialogue.

Meanwhile, we would like to pay tribute to the current cooperation of the Serbian Government and the Kosovo authorities with the Reconstruction Implementation Commission to protect Serbian Orthodox sites. In that regard, we agree with the Secretary-General regarding the significant and effective role that the religious authorities can play in reducing tension and in building bridges among groups in a way that would protect such sites and strengthen reconciliation.

The Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe adopted a resolution on the report of Special Rapporteur Dick Marty on the inhuman treatment of people and illicit trafficking in human organs in Kosovo. We hope that appropriate legal means can be found to establish the truth, devoid of politicization, in a way that meets the expectations of Kosovars and achieves justice for the families of those victims.

Looking beyond such incidents, we affirm the importance of fighting corruption and of transparency and accountability as the main pillars in building stable institutions and lasting peace.

Mr. Sangqu (South Africa): South Africa wishes to welcome Mr. Lamberto Zannier, Special Representative of the Secretary-General, back to the Security Council and to thank him for his briefing on the activities of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK). We also welcome His Excellency Mr. Vuk Jeremić, Foreign

Minister of Serbia, and Mrs. Vlora Çitaku, and thank them for their statements.

According to resolution 1244 (1999), part of UNMIK's mandate is to promote security, stability and respect for human rights in Kosovo, in coordination with the leadership in both Belgrade and Pristina. Those are important aspects of UNMIK's mandate, which my delegation strongly supports. An integral part of implementing that mandate towards securing sustainable security and durable peace in Kosovo is the promotion of dialogue and reconciliation between the two sides.

South Africa urges both sides to commence to resolve outstanding issues with direct constructive dialogue, as mandated by General Assembly resolution 64/298. Furthermore, we consider it critical to continue with the implementation of UNMIK's mandated activities aimed at promoting reconciliation, such as addressing the issue of missing persons, the return of displaced persons and the protection of religious and cultural heritage sites.

My delegation is concerned about the attacks against UNMIK reported in the media in Kosovo and all attacks aimed at undermining the legitimacy of UNMIK as mandated by the Security Council. We urge parties to continue supporting UNMIK in the implementation of its mandate.

South Africa continues to be concerned that the current political impasse undermines peace and stability in the region, thus further undermining the full potential for sustainable development and regional integration. Since dialogue is essential to the peaceful resolution of the crisis, it is important for Belgrade and Pristina to start full-fledged dialogue on outstanding matters between them to achieve a sustainable solution to the situation in the Western Balkans.

My delegation therefore calls on the authorities in Pristina to exert all efforts to reach a political solution that will allow them to start the dialogue process. We also call on both sides to start such talks in good faith and be willing to listen and to compromise, with the aim of reaching agreement.

The need to address issues of direct concern to the population in Kosovo has an impact on reconciliation. In that regard, we are pleased to note the progress made in the return of displaced persons, but continue to be concerned about the lack of resources to deal with the forced returns in Kosovo. More work needs to be done to address the challenges currently faced.

In addition, we welcome the limited progress in the Working Group on Missing Persons, and have noted the call by Serbian and Kosovo Albanian families for the Working Group to hold joint briefing sessions. In our view, such briefings would continue to contribute towards establishing direct contact between the various communities, especially the Serbian and Albanian communities, which, we believe, directly contributes to reconciliation efforts. Another example of progress relating to reconciliation is the work done by the Reconstruction Implementation Commission on the reconstruction of religious and heritage sights.

The fragile progress towards stability is also undermined by the continued volatile situation in Northern Kosovo/Mitrovica. It is essential that the Security Council-mandated mission be respected throughout Kosovo and that its authority not be undermined. All sides must also refrain from any acts of provocation and must respect the international presence throughout Kosovo.

Furthermore, South Africa is concerned that the limited progress in reconciliation could also be unravelled by the disturbing allegations of organ smuggling against several leading political figures in Kosovo. Those allegations need to be fully and properly investigated, and South Africa is of the view that an appropriate international response aimed at ending impunity must be found.

It is clear that much work remains to be done in Kosovo. We remain ready to work with the Council to ensure that UNMIK's mandate is fully implemented.

Mr. Osorio (Colombia) (*spoke in Spanish*): At the outset, I would like to welcome the presence of His Excellency the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Serbia and of Mrs. Vlora Çitaku, the representative of Kosovo, who have come to the Council with important statements that merit our full attention and consideration. I also appreciate the comprehensive briefing presented by Mr. Lamberto Zannier, Special Representative of the Secretary-General, which attests to the importance of the mandate and the significant contribution of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) in promoting security, stability and respect for human rights in that country in accordance with resolution 1244 (1999).

Colombia has followed with interest the recent election and institution-building activities in Kosovo. We believe that effective democracy is essential to strengthening governance, generating citizen trust and promoting an atmosphere of greater harmony among Kosovars of all ethnicities, as well as to the continued improvement in relations with the countries of the region.

We share the concerns with regard to the impact that events surrounding the elections on 12 December 2010, referred to in the report (S/2011/43) of the Secretary-General, could have on the evolution of the dialogue between Pristina and Belgrade. Colombia hopes that the firm commitment expressed by both sides is reflected in concrete steps by taking advantage of the European Union's readiness to facilitate the process, which the General Assembly welcomed last September in its resolution 64/298.

That regional support could help bring together Pristina and Belgrade and provide broader perspectives for addressing issues and differences between the two countries, taking into account the experience and participation of regional organizations' in the stabilization process of Kosovo in support of UNMIK' mandate.

Yesterday we had an opportunity to listen to the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Lithuania (see S/PV.6481), who in his capacity as Chairman-in-Office of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe referred to some of his organization's contributions in Kosovo. Likewise, the Secretary-General's report and Mr. Zannier's briefing have highlighted UNMIK's cooperation and coordination with the European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo and with NATO's International Security Force. In that context, it is appropriate for the Security Council to decisively support the process of dialogue between Pristina and Belgrade while also continuing to promote efforts to encourage an environment of political, social and multicultural stability throughout Kosovo.

The Secretary-General's report refers to the recurrence of incidents and tension of ethnic nature, especially in Northern Kosovo. It is imperative to ensure adequate respect and coordination by Kosovo's authorities with regard to UNMIK's competencies throughout the entire territory, including the northern area of the country. In addition, strategies that foster increased contacts and exchanges among the different communities should be agreed upon. The positive experiences with regard to interreligious dialogue and the reconstruction and preservation of cultural heritage on the ground in Kosovo are avenues that should be further explored towards more harmonious coexistence.

Colombia considers very serious the references to the possible commission of war crimes related to illicit trafficking in human organs in Kosovo. The Security Council should evaluate this issue against the backdrop of the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and the value of justice in the promotion of peace, and then determine the course to be pursued.

Colombia supports the work of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo aimed at consolidating an enabling political, social and economic environment in the country that leads to definitive peace and stability in the Balkans.

Mr. Li Baodong (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): I would like to thank Special Representative of the Secretary-General Zannier for his briefing. I also welcome the presence among us today of Mr. Vuk Jeremić, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Serbia. I have listened very carefully to his statement, as well as that by Mrs. Vlora Çitaku.

Currently, the overall situation in Kosovo is calm. However, it remains complex and fragile. We are concerned about the inter-communal tensions that exist in Kosovo.

China respects the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Serbia. We have always been of the opinion that the question of Kosovo touches on peace and stability in the Balkans, and in fact in the whole of Europe. It is therefore up to the parties concerned, within the framework of the pertinent resolutions of the Security Council, to find a negotiated solution that is acceptable to both parties. China encourages the beginning of dialogue between the various parties with a view to finding an appropriate solution to the outstanding issues.

Resolution 1244 (1999) remains valid and continues to be an important legal instrument to resolve the issue of Kosovo. China supports the continued work of the United Nations Interim

Administration Mission in Kosovo in line with the mandate conferred upon it by the Security Council. We call for a greater role for it in solving the problems in Kosovo. All parties concerned must ensure the security of UNMIK staff and facilitate their work under optimal conditions.

China is extremely concerned about the illicit trafficking in human organs in Kosovo, as indicated in the report of the Secretary-General (S/2011/43). Any violations of international law and international humanitarian law are intolerable. China understands the reasonable concerns of Serbia and supports the opening of a United Nations inquiry into this matter.

Ms. Čolaković (Bosnia and Herzegovina): On behalf of the delegation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, I would like to express our appreciation to the Secretary-General for his comprehensive report (S/2011/43) on the activities of the United Nations Interim Administration in Kosovo (UNMIK). We also commend Mr. Lamberto Zannier, Special Representative of the Secretary General for Kosovo, for his briefing on recent developments in Kosovo, as well as the staff of UNMIK for their efforts.

We welcome the participation in today's meeting of His Excellency Mr. Vuk Jeremić, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Serbia, as well as Mrs. Vlora Çitaku.

Bosnia and Herzegovina commends UNMIK, operating within the framework of resolution 1244 (1999) in its role of maintaining peace, security, stability and respect for human rights in Kosovo. We appreciate UNMIK's efforts in encouraging the process of reconciliation and the facilitation of constructive dialogue and regional cooperation, as well as its focus on mediation between the communities and its support to minority communities.

During the reporting period, political developments in Kosovo, in particular the extraordinary elections of 12 December and their aftermath, have slowed down the momentum generated by General resolution 64/298, adopted on 9 September 2010, which welcomed the readiness of the European Union to facilitate a dialogue between Pristina and Belgrade. We regret that UNMIK was excluded from the Assembly elections process and could not certify the results. We also note that the elections were held in a peaceful atmosphere and did not provoke additional tensions among the population. In that regard, we believe that it is important that all stakeholders maintain their positive and constructive approach towards dialogue in order to address and resolve longstanding issues, which would contribute significantly to the consolidation of peace, stability and reconciliation.

Bosnia and Herzegovina wants to express its strong concerns regarding the allegations contained in the report of Special Rapporteur Dick Marty entitled "Inhuman treatment of people and illicit trafficking in human organs in Kosovo". Furthermore, we welcome the willingness of the European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo (EULEX) to consider any evidence that the Special Rapporteur may have uncovered and to provide its full support to any future investigation that may be conducted into the allegations.

We have taken note of the fact that the security situation in Kosovo has remained relatively calm, in spite of some incidents, mainly in northern Kosovo, where the situation continues to be sensitive and politically delicate, as stated in the Secretary-General's report. In the context of improving inter-community dialogue and building confidence among the parties, we are encouraged by the latest developments in the five recently decentralized Kosovo Serb-majority municipalities, which have implemented capital projects at a cost of €1 million each, received from the Pristina budget, mainly for investments in roads, water, sanitation and other local infrastructure projects.

Although the number of voluntary minority returns remains low, we are encouraged by the fact that there has been an increase in returns as compared to the previous year. In addition, while stressing the importance of providing conditions conducive to sustainable returns, we welcome UNMIK's efforts to decrease tensions and draw attention to common needs. Furthermore, during the reporting period, UNMIK and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees facilitated several "go-and-see" and "go-and-inform" visits, which gave an opportunity to displaced persons to visit their properties and make first-hand assessments of conditions in the receiving community.

With regard to the rule of law, we reiterate our support for the activities of UNMIK and EULEX, operating within the status-neutral framework of the United Nations. We also support the existing practice of cooperation and coordination between UNMIK, EULEX, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and NATO — the latter present through the troops of the Kosovo Force — and we hope that this practice will continue.

Finally, we would like to reiterate our long-standing position that stability and security in Kosovo are significant for achieving lasting peace and prosperity in our region. We believe that the international community should continue to play an important role in supporting the aspirations of the countries of the region towards integration into European and Euro-Atlantic structures, respectively.

Mrs. DiCarlo (United States of America): I would like to welcome Foreign Minister Jeremić and Acting Foreign Minister Çitaku to the Council and thank them for their comments. I would also like to thank Special Representative Zannier for his comprehensive briefing today.

Let me take this opportunity to congratulate the people of Kosovo on the third anniversary of their independence tomorrow, 17 February. In these three years, Kosovo has demonstrated a commitment to developing democratic institutions and to playing a responsible role in the neighbourhood and in the wider international community.

Let me also take a moment to congratulate the people of Serbia on the celebration of their national day on 15 February. Serbia too has demonstrated a commitment to peace and stability in the Balkans.

The United States supports the aspirations of both countries to achieve lasting peace and prosperity and to complete their European integration. To this end, we look forward to the European Union-facilitated dialogue between Serbia and Kosovo, aimed at improving the quality of life for their citizens and supporting both countries as they make progress on their respective paths to membership in the European Union.

I would like to make three additional points. First, in its three years of independence, Kosovo has made substantial progress in building its democracy. It administered municipal elections in 2009 and snap National Assembly elections at the end of last year. The implementation of decentralization has moved government closer to the people and Kosovo has established new Serb-majority municipalities that have fostered improved political engagement in minority communities. We note, however, that serious irregularities occurred in some areas during the December parliamentary elections. That said, Kosovo's electoral and judicial institutions responded immediately and appropriately to hold orderly re-votes. Kosovo Serbs south of the Ibar River turned out in record numbers during the December elections. This is a welcome sign of the benefits of decentralization and of the improved security and political situation in Kosovo. Still, significant work remains to strengthen the electoral system, and we join international partners' calls for further electoral reforms. These and other pressing reforms await the new Assembly and Government in the coming days.

The story is not as encouraging in northern Kosovo. The ethnic-Serb community's engagement in Kosovo politics and municipal administration is a critical element for the development of a prosperous multi-ethnic democracy. We are concerned that Serbs in northern Kosovo who have engaged with Kosovo Government institutions have faced organized opposition from parallel institutions, which use violence and intimidation to prevent the democracy and development that has taken root in Serb communities throughout the rest of Kosovo. It is also alarming that, as cited in the Secretary-General's report (S/2011/43), the targeting of international workers in northern Kosovo has increased.

Secondly, the rule of law is paramount to stability and progress in the Balkans. The United States takes any allegations of criminal wrongdoing seriously, especially with regard to war crimes. We therefore take the allegations contained in the Council of Europe report seriously — allegations that had previously been investigated by the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia and the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK). We fully support the European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo (EULEX) leading a comprehensive, thorough and impartial follow-on investigation. EULEX has a jurisdiction and mandate to deal with war crimes. It has dealt with similar issues in the past and it will have the full weight of the European Union and its partners to support it. We welcome the declared support of the Governments of Kosovo and Albania for such an investigation. We do not believe that an ad hoc United Nations mechanism is necessary or appropriate in the light of the EULEX mandate.

This brings me to my third point. The process of reconciliation must continue in order to maintain peace and stability in the Balkans. We were encouraged that voluntary returns increased in 2010, with nearly twice as many Kosovo Serbs returning as compared to 2009. We would also note that NATO's Kosovo Force continues to transfer protective responsibilities for Serbian Orthodox properties to the Kosovo police without incident. The protection, and support for, the religious and cultural heritage of all of Kosovo's communities is critical to reconciliation efforts. We commend UNMIK's efforts to facilitate the work of the Reconstruction Implementation Commission. We also welcome the efforts of the European Union facilitator for the protection of religious and cultural heritage and call on other members to aid in these and similar efforts. The United States recently allocated $1.4 million for cultural preservation and restoration projects throughout Kosovo.

Let me reiterate the commitment of the United States to a stable, prosperous and democratic Kosovo that enjoys genuine cooperation with Serbia and the Balkan region.

Mr. Araud (France) (*spoke in French*): I would like to thank Mr. Vuk Jeremić, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Serbia, and Mrs. Vlora Çitaku, Acting Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Kosovo, for their presence here today and for the statements they delivered. I also welcome Mr. Lamberto Zannier, Special Representative of the Secretary-General, and commend the work he and the entire staff of his Mission are carrying out in Kosovo.

Tomorrow, Kosovo will celebrate the third anniversary of its independence. What assessment can be made of the development of this young State? First of all, everyone must agree that the fear that chaos would ensue, expressed by some at the time of the declaration of independence, was unfounded. The institutional framework that Kosovo set out for itself is being respected by its authorities and supported by its population. Legislative elections were held in December. They went well overall — better than in many other countries that are older than Kosovo.

As the Secretary-General noted in his report (S/2011/43), the level of participation by Kosovar Serbs in those elections was the highest since 2001. The Security Council has every reason to congratulate itself for this. Whatever our positions are on the question of status, this high participation rate proves the greater maturity on the part of the population and shows their willingness to share a common future.

To date, 75 States have recognized Kosovo. Each recognition brings greater stability to Kosovo and to the entire region. But these recognitions are not enough. Kosovo must indeed still make progress in many areas. The rule of law must be strengthened, and this must be accomplished through a strengthening of institutions and of the fight against corruption and organized crime. Judicial institutions must be consolidated.

In his report, the Secretary-General characterizes the security situation as relatively calm but potentially volatile. While incidents are, thankfully, less frequent than they were a few years ago, there are still too many of them. It is unacceptable that vehicles driven by Serbs are the target of rock-throwing, even if these attacks are essentially symbolic.

Moreover, the actions of Serb extremists in the north of Kosovo are equally unacceptable. Acts of intimidation and pressure by these extremists directed against the Serbs in the north of Kosovo and aimed at preventing them from living on good terms with all of the communities must not be tolerated. The experience of Serbs living south of the Ibar River, in particular in the new municipalities created under the Ahtisaari plan, shows that peaceful coexistence is possible.

A process of dialogue must be established soon between the two neighbouring States. The European Union is ready to facilitate this dialogue, which we hope to see begin as soon as the Government of Kosovo is formed. For this dialogue, which will have to do with technical subjects of common interest, to be fruitful and bring about concrete results for the population, it must take place without interference by one country in the territory of the other.

All of the States of the former Yugoslavia have been granted the same chance at achieving European integration. Each one is making progress at its own pace in this process of European rapprochement. One of these States has already joined the European Union.

However, the horrors of the war years remain ever-present for the populations concerned. The International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia has carried out exemplary work and has ensured that justice is done. Two accused remain to be arrested as soon as possible to answer for their actions.

A disturbing report adopted recently by the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe included allegations — presented in the hypothetical — of organ trafficking that allegedly took place in Kosovo and Albania at the end of the war. An inquiry carried out several years ago on the basis of the same rumours failed to confirm those rumours. We would like for light to be definitively shed on this matter and for the proof, if it exists — and until now it has not been presented — to be provided to the European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo, which has the mandate and capacity to successfully carry out the necessary investigations.

A new Government will take office in Kosovo. It must spare no effort in helping the young State continue to make progress. Many different tasks will have to be tackled at once: the rule of law, good governance, the fight against corruption, inter-community dialogue, economic reconstruction, dialogue with Serbia and the strengthening of its international relations.

For its part, France will continue to closely follow the situation in Kosovo and will help it come into line with European norms, as we are also doing today with Serbia.

Sir Mark Lyall Grant (United Kingdom): I would like to start by welcoming the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Lamberto Zannier; the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Serbia, Mr. Vuk Jeremić; and the Acting Foreign Minister of Kosovo, Mrs. Vlora Çitaku, to the Council Chamber today.

I would also like to express the United Kingdom's gratitude for the role played by the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) in promoting stability and reconciliation in Kosovo and for Mr. Zannier's continued leadership and hard work.

Kosovo has now achieved 75 recognitions, held its first national election since independence and tomorrow will celebrate its third anniversary as an independent State. I congratulate Kosovo on these achievements.

The national elections in December in Kosovo were widely recognized to have been conducted in a peaceful and stable manner. There were a number of irregularities and allegations of fraud. Acting Foreign Minister Çitaku has herself recognized this. But the efficient and responsible manner with which the Central Elections Commission and the Constitutional Court addressed these complaints, in line with the electoral code, is a further sign of Kosovo's maturing democracy.

The results have now been confirmed by the Central Elections Commission. We welcome the increased participation by the Kosovo Serbian population. This is reflected in the fact that there will be 25 minority members of Parliament in the Kosovo Assembly, which is five above the 20 seats reserved. The United Kingdom looks forward to supporting the incoming Kosovo Government.

Three years after Kosovo's declaration of independence, the challenges it faces are changing. Increasingly, they are the same as those of other States in the region: to foster economic development, to improve the lives of its citizens and to drive forward reform in pursuit of European standards. The new Government should seize the opportunity to address these challenges and commit itself to the task of preparing for European Union (EU) membership.

In September, the General Assembly welcomed the prospect of an EU-facilitated dialogue between Pristina and Belgrade. All parties are committed to starting the dialogue as soon as possible. Like the Secretary-General, I am pleased that the European Union representatives appointed to facilitate the talks have held preparatory meetings with both sides. My Government continues to believe that the dialogue is essential to improving practical cooperation between Serbia and Kosovo and for making progress towards both countries' European perspective. I urge both sides to engage quickly, in a spirit of cooperation and compromise.

Some cooperation is already taking place. The Secretary-General rightly highlights the good work that is being taken forward on issues such as missing persons and religious and cultural heritage. I would like to thank UNMIK and the International Committee of the Red Cross for their role in this. The United Kingdom has long supported the work of the United Nations and the Government of Kosovo to ensure that returnees feel able to go home. So I am particularly pleased to see that the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees has recorded an increase in the number of voluntary minority returns, with the 2010 figures almost double those of 2009.

In January, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe adopted a report by Special Rapporteur Dick Marty on inhuman treatment of people and illicit trafficking in human organs in Kosovo. The United Kingdom Government expects allegations such as these to be treated seriously. I therefore welcome the decision by the European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo (EULEX) to open preliminary investigations into the allegations, and the public commitment by the Governments of Kosovo and Albania to cooperate fully with the investigation.

EULEX has the mandate, authority and jurisdiction to take forward a full and independent investigation. In the light of this, we do not believe that a Security Council-mandated investigation into these allegations is necessary.

Progress in Kosovo is irreversible. The world's youngest country is a viable, independent State with a clear future in the European Union. But that future belongs not just to Kosovo, but also to Serbia and the other countries of the Western Balkans. The United Kingdom supports all of them.

Mr. Wittig (Germany): I would like to join my colleagues in warmly welcoming the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Serbia, Mr. Vuk Jeremić, and the Acting Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Kosovo, Mrs. Vlora Çitaku. I would also like to thank Special Representative of the Secretary-General Lamberto Zannier for his briefing. We appreciate the contribution made by the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) and commend the dedication and service of its staff.

Tomorrow, Kosovo will celebrate the third anniversary of its independence. We congratulate the people and leadership of Kosovo for the progress that has been achieved over the past three years. We will continue our support for a free, multi-ethnic, democratic and dynamic Kosovo, whose future lies in Europe.

We welcome the most recent recognitions of Kosovo as an independent State, bringing the total number of recognitions to 75. Germany sees those recognitions as a clear sign that the region has gained stability since Kosovo's independence. We call upon States that have not yet done so to recognize the Republic of Kosovo, as a contribution to peace and stability in the Western Balkans.

Our common goal in the region is very clear. We want peace and stability, freedom, the rule of law and respect for human rights. The prospect of European Union (EU) membership has facilitated peace and reconciliation. One day, all countries in the region, as well as Serbia and Kosovo, should find their place under a common European roof.

Germany commends and fully supports the efforts of the High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy of the European Union, Baroness Catherine Ashton, and her representatives to facilitate a process of dialogue between Belgrade and Pristina, as supported by General Assembly resolution 64/298, adopted in September 2010. We welcome the fact that both parties are ready for that dialogue and we hope that, after some delays, it will now start quickly and in a constructive spirit.

We echo the Secretary-General in welcoming the peaceful conduct of the recent parliamentary elections in Kosovo. We view the increased overall turnout and the good participation by Kosovo Serbs and other communities as a positive sign of the wish of all of Kosovo's citizens to jointly participate in building a sustainable, multi-ethnic future.

We regret that a number of irregularities marred the voting and counting processes. However, we welcome the fact that the competent institutions in Kosovo addressed the irregularities in an efficient and responsible manner, in line with the existing legal framework in Kosovo. All unlawful acts related to the elections have to be investigated and prosecuted so as to further strengthen the credibility and legitimacy of the democratic process in Kosovo.

We hope for the speedy formation of a new Government and the election of the new President of the Republic. The new Government will face a number of important challenges, such as addressing the pressing need for socio-economic development, strengthening the rule of law throughout Kosovo and combating corruption and organized crime. The full integration of representatives of the ethnic communities in institutions and society, especially the Kosovo Serbs, and the protection of their religious and cultural sites will also have to be addressed.

As the report (S/2011/43) of the Secretary-General underlines, many challenges remain in northern Kosovo. Although the overall security situation in Kosovo has remained relatively calm, it continues to be potentially volatile in the north.

We welcome the continued close cooperation between the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo, the European Union Rule of Law Mission (EULEX), the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and the Kosovo Force. We fully support the important work of EULEX and are pleased that it has extended its presence and activities in the north of Kosovo so as to guarantee the implementation of its mandate throughout the territory of Kosovo.

The grave allegations of crimes committed against Serbian nationals during and after the end of the armed conflict in Kosovo, as described by the Special Rapporteur of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, Dick Marty, are shocking. Germany takes them seriously. Those allegations must be investigated fully and impartially. We call on all relevant organizations, institutions and individuals to come forward and present any evidence they have to allow for a full investigation. We welcome the fact that the Government of Kosovo and the Government of Albania are prepared to fully cooperate in the full and impartial investigation into the allegations made by the Special Rapporteur.

EULEX has the necessary capacities, competence and, above all, jurisdiction to carry out those investigations. EULEX has our full support and confidence. From our point of view, the setting up of an ad hoc body or tribunal by the Security Council would not serve our joint objective of a speedy and full investigation.

In conclusion, let me reiterate that my country remains committed to a strong partnership between the United Nations, the EU and the relevant actors in the region — a partnership that builds on shared values and common goals.

Mr. Churkin (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We are grateful to the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Kosovo, Mr. Lamberto Zannier, for introducing the report (S/2011/43) of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK). We welcome the participation in today's Security Council meeting of the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Serbia, Mr. Vuk Jeremić, and we share his assessments.

We had hoped for a more objective statement by Mrs. Čitaku.

Russia supports the territorial integrity and sovereignty of the Republic of Serbia. In our view, it is undeniable that resolution 1244 (1999) remains in full effect and continues to be binding on all parties as the international legal basis for a Kosovo settlement and for ensuring security in the province. Our position of non-recognition of Kosovo's unilateral declaration of independence has not changed.

We believe that it is important for the stakeholders to resume dialogue so as to reach a settlement of the Kosovo issue. In that connection, the unilateral actions of Pristina and the international presence in northern Kosovo are unacceptable. Those actions are aimed at changing realities on the ground in order to influence the modalities and outcome of the upcoming dialogue.

Russia does not consider the Kosovo Assembly elections held on 12 December 2010 to be legitimate, as they were organized by the authorities of the self-proclaimed Republic of Kosovo and were not based on a decision by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, as required by resolution 1244 (1999).

We cannot but take into account the fact that from the beginning, international monitoring organizations declined to certify the elections. Participation by the Serb community in the elections was limited. In northern Kosovo, Serbs essentially boycotted the event. Observers noted serious violations during the election process, including tampering with the electoral lists, the use of counterfeit ballots, multiple votes cast by the same people and bribery of voters. Also worrisome are the results achieved at the polls by radical Kosovo Albanian parties, in particular the Self-Determination Movement, which advocates for the creation of a greater Albania.

The security situation in the province remains tense, owing primarily to growing tendencies among Kosovo Albanians towards independent and largely provocative actions. We are concerned at the fact that the self-proclaimed authorities in the province, as noted in the Secretary-General's report, are carrying out infrastructure projects without coordinating with

UNMIK, and encouraging Kosovo Albanians to undertake unregulated and unilateral returns to their previous places of residence without appropriate legal authorization. Such actions could seriously exacerbate the inter-ethnic situation in northern Kosovo.

We share the concern of the Serb authorities and the Serbian Orthodox Church at the situation that has developed in connection with the handover by the NATO Kosovo Force of the duty of protecting the province's most significant Serbian cultural and religious heritage sites to the Kosovo Police. We believe that those actions could create additional tensions over security in Kosovo, especially because further incidents of robbery and vandalism at Serbian holy sites occurred during the reporting period.

The situation of the return to Kosovo of internally displaced persons, including the Serb population, remains unsatisfactory, for many reasons. One of the main reasons is that returnees have no assurance of their own security. We continue to believe that the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo, on the basis of its mandate from the Security Council, should play the most active role possible in assisting with the Kosovo settlement process.

UNMIK must also fully carry out its duties in respect of the external representation of Kosovo in regional and international organizations and mechanisms.

Attempts to discredit UNMIK in the Kosovar media continue to be unacceptable. The campaign against United Nations staff threatens the security of international personnel and prevents them from fulfilling their duties.

We are deeply alarmed by the information in the Secretary-General's report regarding the investigations into allegations of inhuman treatment of people and illicit trafficking in human organs in Kosovo, as reported by Special Rapporteur Dick Marty, a member of the Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe. The report not only is timely, but also has considerable moral and humanitarian significance. We welcome the adoption of a resolution by the Parliamentary Assembly in support of investigating the incidents mentioned in the document.

Carrying out such a detailed and comprehensive investigation is the duty of the international community. We agree with the arguments put forward by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Serbia with regard to that, and support the establishment by the Security Council of a special international investigation mechanism accountable to the United Nations.

Such an investigation format is necessary since those activities could go far beyond the region, and given the extremely unsatisfactory situation in Kosovo with regard to witness protection, as mentioned in Mr. Gardetto's report to the Council of Europe. According to data contained in the report, in Kosovo, "there is a real threat of retaliation and key witnesses being eliminated". In essence, the only real way to protect witnesses and their relatives is by relocating them outside Kosovo.

It continues to be necessary for the Security Council to play a leading role in the settlement of Kosovo, as it remains the guarantor of compliance with international law, the United Nations Charter and the Council's own decisions.

Mr. Moungara Moussotsi (Gabon) (*spoke in French*): We too would like to thank His Excellency Mr. Lamberto Zannier, Special Representative of the Secretary-General, for his comprehensive briefing on the report of the Secretary-General (S/2011/43) on the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK). We welcome the presence of His Excellency Mr. Vuk Jeremić, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Serbia, a country with which Gabon is proud to have excellent relations. We thank him for his statement, the content of which we fully support.

Throughout the period under review, the political situation in Kosovo was dominated by the holding, on 12 December 2010, of the first legislative elections since the contested unilateral declaration of independence, which took place on February 2008. We regret that those elections were not organized or supervised by UNMIK, as provided for in its mandate under resolution 1244 (1999).

We also regret that the resumption of dialogue between Serbia and Kosovo, which the General Assembly recommended in its resolution 64/298, of 9 September 2010, under the facilitation of the European Union, has been delayed owing to the holding of those elections. Furthermore, the publication of the Dick Marty report, detailing the inhuman treatment of people and illicit trafficking in human organs in Kosovo, is a source of concern to my delegation. We believe that this is an important issue that deserves all due attention. Gabon therefore supports the need for the Security Council to establish an investigation mechanism answerable to it in order to shed light on the facts highlighted in the Marty report. In that regard, we welcome UNMIK's readiness to provide the necessary support for those inquiries.

Furthermore, we deplore the deteriorating environment in Kosovo, in particular in the north, where UNMIK is subject to hostile and unjustified reporting by some media. We also deplore the fact that illegal construction has helped to stoke tension between the communities. We urge all parties to show restraint and to favour the path of dialogue in stead.

On the security front, while the situation remains generally calm, my delegation nevertheless continues to be concerned about the increase in the number of murders and cases of illegal possession of weapons. Organized crime, smuggling and drug trafficking contribute to an unsafe environment and continue to be of concern in Kosovo.

My delegation would again like to underscore the importance of the two parties pursuing talks on the issue of missing persons, which continues to undermine efforts at reconciliation among the various communities. However, we welcome the progress already made in that regard. We also welcome the fact that the parties have continued their cooperation on religious and cultural heritage.

With regard to the issue of the return of internally displaced persons and refugees, we are concerned about the financial and material difficulties that hinder their reintegration. We would therefore urge the international community to provide consistent assistance in order to encourage the return of those people to their places of origin.

I would like to reaffirm that my country promotes dialogue and consultation to settle crises and conflicts. In the case of Kosovo, Gabon rejects any unilateral declaration of independence and continues to strongly support respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Republic Serbia.

Finally, we would like to reiterate our appreciation to the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, the European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo and the Kosovo Force, which continue to play an important role in the context of implementing resolution 1244 (1999). We also renew our support for the work of all agencies of the United Nations system present on the ground, including UNMIK and its entire staff, whose professionalism we commend.

Mr. Amieyeofori (Nigeria): Let me also join others in thanking His Excellency Mr. Vuk Jeremić, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Serbia, for his very useful statement this afternoon. We would also like to thank Mrs. Vlora Çitaku for her statement and Special Representative of the Secretary-General Lamberto Zannier for his comprehensive update on the situation in Kosovo.

Nigeria welcomes the report of the Secretary-General (S/2011/43) pursuant to resolution 1244 (1999). We also welcome the continued collaboration between the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK), the European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo and the other facilitators in fostering peace and stability in Kosovo and the region. However, it is evident from today's briefings that there are still difficult challenges in Kosovo and in the implementation of resolution 1244 (1999). That situation requires the careful consideration of the Council.

In that regard, we want to observe that UNMIK continues to operate in difficult circumstances, with sustained media attacks undermining efforts by the Mission to fully deliver on its mandate. We deplore those attacks and urge restraint on the part of the parties involved. Nigeria believes that UNMIK still has an important role to play and that its presence and support is required to bolster efforts at assisting the communities to overcome their various challenges.

Nigeria shares the Secretary-General's concerns about the fragile security situation in northern Kosovo. Inter-ethnic tensions and attacks against the minority communities, as well as members of the international community, undermine the prospects for peace and stability in the territory. We believe that the perpetrators of crimes should be properly brought to justice, and efforts made to reach out to the victims. It is important to prevent such incidents from reoccurring by enhancing the necessary mechanisms for the protection of lives and property and by promoting mutual tolerance, harmony and coexistence among the people.

Nigeria remains convinced that sustained dialogue is indispensable to achieving a mutually acceptable solution to all outstanding issues in Kosovo. The parties should therefore remain fully committed to dialogue, in furtherance of General Assembly 64/298, adopted on 9 September 2010. We urge the parties to redouble their efforts to commence that process in the shortest possible time, taking into account the specific circumstances and concerns of all communities. The resulting overall peace dividend would be far-reaching for Kosovo and the region, as it would not only address the problem of insecurity but also open up economic opportunities for the various communities.

On the issue of illicit trafficking in human organs in Kosovo, highlighted in the Secretary-General's report, Nigeria considers it a very serious human rights issue that requires an international investigation, taking into account the various jurisdictions involved in the matter. We encourage UNMIK to provide the support that may be necessary to the process.

We welcome the increased support for returnees recorded during the reporting period. Efforts should be deployed to address concerns over the viability of conditions of return, including security, access to public services, housing and property rights and socio-economic opportunities. The absence of these critical elements will constrain efforts to promote the sustainable return of displaced persons, as well as reconciliation, longer-term stability and the development of Kosovo.

We commend the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and his team for their unrelenting efforts in promoting peace and stability in Kosovo, as well as the region, and assure the Mission of our continued support.

Mr. Moraes Cabral (Portugal): I wish to thank Special Representative Lamberto Zannier for his very clear and comprehensive briefing to the Council, and both His Excellency Mr. Vuk Jeremić, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Serbia, and Mrs. Vlora Çitaku, Acting Foreign Minister of Kosovo, for their statements and for the elements they have brought to our attention.

The latest report of the Secretary-General (S/2011/43) on the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) presents us with a picture of a country that is facing serious challenges on its way — as we all hope — to peace and prosperity. It also draws attention to the work UNMIK has been doing together with the Kosovo Force (KFOR), the European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo (EULEX) and several other players on the ground in Kosovo.

Portugal would like to convey, as a contributor to EULEX and KFOR, as well as a country with a long involvement in the stabilization of the Balkans, our sincere appreciation for the work accomplished so far. Our joint efforts remain vital in order to consolidate peace and to draw the region closer to integration in the European institutional framework — an ambition that we share.

As regards political life in Kosovo, the December general elections are the main event on which to base an analysis of this period. Unfortunately, the elections suffered from some serious shortcomings and a high number of irregularities, as stated in the Secretary-General's report. The overall climate was peaceful, however, and the reaction by the Central Elections Commission and the Election Complaints and Appeals Panel was swift and managed to overcome some of the irregularities.

We believe it is important for Kosovo institutions and international players to continue working together in order to consolidate democratic institutions and foster solid commitment to democratic values and practice. It is also noteworthy that the participation of the Kosovo Serb community was higher than in 2007, in spite of scant turn-out north of the Ibër/Ibar River.

I took good note of the Special Representative's comments on the pressing economic and fiscal problems Kosovo is facing and the need to address these issues, lest they become an added element of instability.

Political uncertainty in Kosovo has also delayed the much-needed Pristina and Belgrade dialogue. Portugal urges both parties to start comprehensive negotiations under the auspices of the European Union, with a view to settle all of their differences in the spirit of General Assembly resolution 64/298, and to do so at the earliest possible occasion. This would undoubtedly be in the interests of both Pristina and Belgrade, and of the region and Europe as a whole.

Beyond the elections, other facts remain — more enduring and far-reaching in their consequences. Incidents between communities still occur, with victims on both sides, and other elements that may trigger new tensions abound. UNMIK's efforts and dedication to ensure peace and security must be duly noted and appreciated. We therefore urge all actors on the ground to work with UNMIK fully and in good faith and to engage seriously in the process to settle their differences.

These incidents notwithstanding, it must be said that several indicators are encouraging, especially with respect to the development of municipal power. We hope that further investment in education and human and financial resources will generate strengthened institutions and capabilities. We expect that national and local authorities will find balanced solutions to the issues that inevitably arise between the communities.

I would also like to stress the importance of the ongoing cooperation between Kosovo authorities and EULEX regarding the rule of law. Again, the task facing Kosovo's Administration is one of institution- and capacity-building. We commend and support the efforts of the European Union Special Representative in this context.

Concerning the report of Mr. Dick Marty to the Council of Europe, I took note of the Special Representative's references to the seriousness of these allegations and I paid careful attention to what Minister Jeremić said to the Council on this subject. I took special note of his comments concerning the possibly wider regional dimension of this issue and the need to extend effective protection to witnesses. The allegations are indeed extremely disturbing, and if proved would amount to particularly despicable crimes. They deserve a very thorough investigation. We welcome the readiness expressed by Kosovo and Albania to cooperate in that regard.

We fully support EULEX's investigations on this matter that are already under way, and we hope that they will allow for a full clarification of the allegations. But we also believe that we must follow this issue closely and keep an open mind on any future action that the investigations may require. In line with what we have always maintained concerning other serious crimes, whether in the region or elsewhere, impunity is not only intolerable in itself, but also an obstacle to peace and to a healthy and cooperative political environment.

The work done by UNMIK in securing religious and cultural sites in Kosovo stands out as a particularly successful aspect of this Mission's mandate. It can be a very important contribution to interfaith contact and dialogue. Portugal expresses its optimism towards the continued good results of UNMIK's work on this issue. We also praise the role played by the Council of Europe's Reconstruction Implementation Commission, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, KFOR and EULEX so that Kosovo's rich heritage, which shines well beyond its borders, is safeguarded from turmoil and endures for centuries to come.

To conclude, the report we are discussing today reminds us once more how important it is for Kosovo and Serbia to start a European Union-facilitated dialogue. It will eventually close this chapter of their history, reinforce peace and stability in the Balkans and help the whole region in fulfilling its European integration objections.

Mr. Vinay Kumar (India): I would like to join others in thanking Special Representative of the Secretary-General Zannier for his briefing. I would also like to thank His Excellency Mr. Vuk Jeremić, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Serbia, for his country's perspective on the situation in Kosovo. My delegation has carefully listened to the statement of Kosovo's representative, Mrs. Vlora Çitaku.

The Secretary-General's report (S/2011/43) on the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) has brought out in detail the prevailing situation there. We note that with UNMIK's facilitation, Belgrade and Pristina have continued to make progress on some issues, including missing persons and religious and cultural heritage. We encourage the two parties to address all of the remaining issues seriously and expeditiously. UNMIK should also continue its work on facilitating communication between the two parties.

We note from the report of the Secretary-General that, although the overall security situation in Kosovo is relatively calm, the continued prevalence of individual as well as organized crime makes the security situation potentially volatile. In this connection, the report of the Council of Europe's Special Rapporteur, Mr. Dick Marty, which contains allegations of inhuman treatment of people and illicit trafficking in human organs, merits examination. We suggest that a thorough and impartial investigation be carried out by an entity legally empowered to look into all aspects of the matter.

The Secretary-General's report shows that a considerable number of tasks under pillars 1 and 2 — concerning police, justice and civil administration, which are monitored by UNMIK — remain to be accomplished. Accordingly, we urge the Special Representative of the Secretary-General to continue to implement UNMIK's mandate.

We call on all parties to cooperate fully with UNMIK and to facilitate its work. We hope that all the issues concerning Kosovo will be resolved peacefully through consultation and dialogue. We also support the extension of UNMIK's mandate so that it can continue to work towards the fulfilment of the tasks mandated to it by the Council.

The President: I shall now make a statement in my capacity as representative of Brazil.

I welcome His Excellency Mr. Vuk Jeremić, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Serbia, and thank him for his remarks. I also thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Lamberto Zannier, for his briefing, and Mrs. Vlora Çitaku for her remarks.

Stability in the Balkans is a matter of serious concern to Brazil. We see progress and commend the efforts that have been made to ensure that the region remains stable and on its way towards further integration and cooperation. Brazil continues to believe that resolution 1244 (1999) offers an adequate framework for a negotiated settlement of the dispute. We are confident that a fair and legitimate solution can be reached under the auspices of the Security Council, consistent with its authority and primary responsibility in matters pertaining to international peace and security.

Brazil supports the invaluable work carried out by the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) in implementing its Security Council mandate. UNMIK has a key role to play in Kosovo under the framework of resolution 1244 (1999), particularly in promoting engagement among Pristina, Belgrade and other relevant stakeholders. I wish to comment on recent political developments on the ground that may have an impact on efforts towards a final settlement.

The 12 December elections for the Kosovo Assembly were held in a peaceful atmosphere, as stressed in the report of the Secretary-General (S/2011/43). We are concerned, however, by the fact that UNMIK did not participate in the preparations for these elections and that they were not called by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General. It is worth recalling that, under resolution 1244 (1999), the holding of elections is one of the main responsibilities of the international civil presence in Kosovo. Attention also needs to be paid to the remarks made by international observers regarding complaints and allegations of irregularities in the voting. The accusations that the elections in Kosovo failed to meet international standards need to be investigated.

The Secretary-General's report also highlights a number of violent incidents affecting members of the international community in Kosovo. Although the overall security situation in Kosovo remains relatively calm, attacks targeted specifically against international officers and United Nations staff members cannot be tolerated. Brazil shares the Secretary-General's concern over the continued misrepresentation of UNMIK's activities in northern Kosovo and open challenges to its authority. This situation poses a concrete threat to United Nations personnel and creates difficulties in the fulfilment of UNMIK's mandate.

We also take note of Mr. Jeremić's comments regarding the investigation of allegations of inhuman treatment of people and illicit trafficking in human organs in Kosovo. The severity of such allegations cannot be dismissed. A proper and credible investigation must be carried out. It would be interesting to explore possible options that take into account the need to involve various jurisdictions and the importance of ensuring consistency with resolution 1244 (1999).

In conclusion, we are convinced that the Council should continue to keep political developments in Kosovo under close review. It is our hope that the European Union-facilitated dialogue between Pristina and Belgrade can take place without further delay. As envisaged in General Assembly resolution 64/298, adopted in September 2010, it is vital that these negotiations bear fruit. Dialogue is the best way to resolve outstanding issues and to ensure peace, security and stability.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

There are no further speakers inscribed on my list. The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The meeting rose at 5.35 p.m.

United Nations

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Security Council

Sixty-sixth year

Provisional

6484th meeting

Friday, 18 February 2011, 3 p.m.
New York

President:	Mrs. Viotti	(Brazil)
Members:	Bosnia and Herzegovina	Ms. Čolaković
	China	Mr. Li Baodong
	Colombia	Mr. Osorio
	France	Mr. Araud
	Gabon	Mr. Moungara Moussotsi
	Germany	Mr. Wittig
	India	Mr. Manjeev Singh Puri
	Lebanon	Mr. Salam
	Nigeria	Mr. Onemola
	Portugal	Mr. Moraes Cabral
	Russian Federation	Mr. Churkin
	South Africa	Mr. Sangqu
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Sir Mark Lyall Grant
	United States of America	Ms. Rice

Agenda

The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question

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The meeting was called to order at 3.55 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question

The President: Under rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I should like to invite the representatives of Afghanistan, Algeria, Argentina, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Belarus, Belgium, the Plurinational State of Bolivia, Botswana, Brunei Darussalam, Chile, Comoros, Costa Rica, Cuba, Cyprus, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Djibouti, Ecuador, Egypt, Finland, Greece, Grenada, Guatemala, Guinea, Guyana, Iceland, Indonesia, Iraq, Ireland, Israel, Jordan, Kuwait, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lesotho, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Malaysia, Mali, Malta, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Morocco, Namibia, Nicaragua, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, Peru, the Philippines, Qatar, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Serbia, Slovenia, Somalia, the Sudan, Sweden, Switzerland, Tajikistan, Tunisia, Turkey, Turkmenistan, the United Arab Emirates, Uruguay, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, Viet Nam, Yemen and Zimbabwe to participate in this meeting.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Reuben (Israel) took a seat at the Council table; the representatives of the other aforementioned countries took the seats reserved for them at the side of the Council Chamber.

The President: I should like to inform the Council that I have received a letter dated 18 February 2011 from the Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations, which will be issued as document S/2011/79 and which reads as follows:

> "I have the honour to request that, in accordance with its previous practice, the Security Council invite the Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations to participate in the meeting of the Security Council that will be held on Friday, 18 February 2011, on the situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question."

I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite the Permanent Observer of Palestine to participate in the meeting in accordance with the rules of procedure and the previous practice in this regard.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

Members of the Council have before them document S/2011/24, which contains the text of a draft resolution submitted by Afghanistan, Algeria, Argentina, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Belarus, Belgium, the Plurinational State of Bolivia, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Chile, Comoros, Costa Rica, Cuba, Cyprus, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Djibouti, Ecuador, Egypt, Finland, Gabon, Greece, Grenada, Guatemala, Guinea, Guyana, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iraq, Ireland, Jordan, Kuwait, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lebanon, Lesotho, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Malaysia, Mali, Malta, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Morocco, Namibia, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, Peru, the Philippines, Portugal, Qatar, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Serbia, Slovenia, Somalia, South Africa, the Sudan, Sweden, Switzerland, Tajikistan, Tunisia, Turkey, Turkmenistan, the United Arab Emirates, Uruguay, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, Viet Nam, Yemen and Zimbabwe.

I wish to point out that the draft resolution before the Council contains a tentative list of sponsors. The official list of sponsors will appear in the draft resolution that will be issued under the same document symbol as an official Security Council document.

It is my understanding that the Council is ready to proceed to the vote on the draft resolution before it.

I shall first give the floor to the members who wish to make statements before the voting.

Mr. Salam (Lebanon) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the beginning of this week, on Monday, 14 February, the occupying Power's municipal authorities in Jerusalem adopted a plan to construct 124 new housing units in what is known as the Ramat settlement. On 16 January, the Israeli occupying authorities approved a plan to construct 1,400 new housing units in what is known as the Gilo settlement, south of East Jerusalem. And on 9 January, the Israeli occupying authorities demolished the Shepherd Hotel in occupied Jerusalem — a well-known historic landmark and important part of Palestinian heritage — in a measure to pave the way to establishing a settlement of approximately 400 housing units.

The truth of the matter is that since the Israeli authorities lifted their settlement moratorium last September — a moratorium which, as is well known, was only partial — settlement activity has not returned to its previous rate. Rather, it has doubled. Some have estimated that, in the first six weeks since that date, settlement activity caught up with and surpassed the work that had been partially halted during the previous 10 months.

It is also worth noting here that, according to a statement issued on 12 February by the United Nations Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator for the occupied Palestinian territory, the demolition of Palestinian houses as part of settlement activity in East Jerusalem and surrounding areas increased by 40 per cent in 2010.

If this is part of the reality of Israeli settlement activity, then where are the principles of international law — the principles and provisions that our Organization was built to protect and defend, as stated in the Charter of the United Nations?

Article 49, paragraph 6, of the Fourth Geneva Convention relative to the protection of civilian persons in time of war stipulates that "The Occupying Power shall not deport or transfer parts of its own civilian population into the territory it occupies". In resolution 446 (1979), the Security Council reaffirmed that the Fourth Geneva Convention applied to Arab territories occupied by Israel since 1967. It also determined, in paragraph 1 of that resolution, that

> "the policy and practices of Israel in establishing settlements in the Palestinian and other Arab territories occupied since 1967 have no legal validity and constitute a serious obstruction to achieving a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East".

The Council came to that conclusion dozens of years ago, and has since reiterated it in many resolutions on settlement activity.

If anyone still has any doubts as to the illegality of settlement activity, the July 2004 advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice on the wall concluded that

> "the Israeli settlements in the occupied Palestinian Territory (including East Jerusalem) have been established in breach of international law" (*see A/ES-10/273, para. 120*).

Part 2, article 8, paragraph 2 (b) of the 1998 Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court classifies as a war crime the

> "transfer, directly or indirectly, by the Occupying Power of parts of its own civilian population into the territory it occupies, or the deportation or transfer of all or parts of the population of the occupied territory within or outside this territory".

In addition, in dozens of resolutions — most recently in resolution 65/104 — the General Assembly has reiterated that settlement activity in the Arab territories occupied in 1967 were illegitimate and an obstacle to peace. It has also called for an immediate and complete halt to that activity.

It is worth noting here that the Road Map, established by the international Quartet and adopted by the Security Council in resolution 1515 (2003), compels Israel to freeze "all settlement activity (including natural growth settlements)" (*S/2003/529, annex*). It also compels Israel to "immediately dismantle[…] settlement outposts erected since March 2001".

The Joint Understanding of the 2007 Annapolis Conference also confirmed the commitment of all parties to continue to fulfil their respective obligations under the Road Map until a peace treaty is reached. That of course includes compelling Israel to freeze all settlement activities. The Council adopted the contents of that concluding document in resolution 1850 (2008).

In its statements — the most recent of which was issued on 7 February — the international Quartet has continued to call for the implementation of the provisions of the Road Map, including a halt to settlement activity.

These are the provisions of international law on settlements. These are the resolutions of the General Assembly. These are the resolutions of the Security Council. This is the legal opinion of the International Court of Justice. These are the positions of the international Quartet on Israeli settlement activity.

However, these are the same positions and rulings that Israel has continued to ignore and challenge — to the point where the number of settlers in Jerusalem and the West Bank now exceeds 517,000. We have therefore submitted today's draft resolution on Israeli settlement activity, which we invite members to vote on today.

We are proud of the unprecedented number of States — more than 100 — that have agreed to sponsor the draft resolution. We would like once again to express our special thanks to those States. The purpose of the draft resolution is to have the Security Council play its required role and choose the side of justice and righteousness. We therefore hope that the draft resolution will enjoy unanimous support from the members of the Council.

We have come to the Council not just because we believe that our cause is a just one, which it is. We are also here because we believe in the Charter of the United Nations and in the Organization's central role in upholding justice in the world, without which there can be no international peace and security. We have come to the Council because, in accordance with Article 24 of the Charter, it is the body to which the Members of the United Nations have given the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security.

Today we have come to this Council, and we will continue to return to this Council as long as a comprehensive, just and lasting peace is not achieved in our region of the world, and as long as the Arab Palestinian people are not granted the possibility to enjoy self-determination and to establish their independent State with Al-Quds Al-Sharif as its capital — for Jerusalem, O Jerusalem, you are the path of those who have ascended to Heaven, as sings our country, and you will continue to be the jewel of all cities.

The President: I shall now put the draft resolution to the vote.

A vote was taken by a show of hands.

In favour:

Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brazil, China, Colombia, France, Gabon, Germany, India, Lebanon, Nigeria, Portugal, Russian Federation, South Africa, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland

Against:

United States of America

The President: There were 14 votes in favour and 1 against. The draft resolution has not been adopted, owing to the negative vote of a permanent member of the Council.

I shall now give the floor to those members who wish to make statements after the vote.

Ms. Rice (United States of America): The United States has been deeply committed to pursuing a comprehensive and lasting peace between Israel and the Palestinians. In that context, we have been focused on taking steps that advance the goal of two States living side by side in peace and security, rather than complicating that goal. That includes a commitment to work in good faith with all parties to underscore our opposition to continued settlements.

Our opposition to the resolution before this Council today should therefore not be misunderstood to mean we support settlement activity. On the contrary, we reject in the strongest terms the legitimacy of continued Israeli settlement activity. For more than four decades Israeli settlement activity in territories occupied in 1967 has undermined Israel's security and corroded hopes for peace and stability in the region. Continued settlement activity violates Israel's international commitments, devastates trust between the parties and threatens the prospects for peace.

The United States and our fellow Council members are also in full agreement about the urgent need to resolve the conflict between the Israel and the Palestinians on the basis of the two-State solution and an agreement that establishes a viable, independent and contiguous State of Palestine once and for all. We have invested a tremendous amount of effort and resources in pursuit of that shared goal, and we will continue to do so. But the only way to reach that common goal is through direct negotiations between the parties, with the active and sustained support of the United States and the international community. It is the Israelis' and Palestinians' conflict, and even the best-intentioned outsiders cannot resolve it for them.

Therefore, every potential action must be measured against one overriding standard: whether it will move the parties closer to negotiations and an agreement. Unfortunately, this draft resolution risks hardening the positions of both sides. It could encourage the parties to stay out of negotiations and, if and when they did resume, to return to the Security Council whenever they reached an impasse.

In recent years, no outside country has invested more than the United States of America in the effort to achieve Israeli-Palestinian peace. In recent days we offered a constructive alternative course forward that we believe would have allowed the Council to act unanimously to support the pursuit of peace. We regret that this effort was not successful and thus is no longer viable.

The great impetus for democracy and reform in the region makes it even more urgent to settle this bitter and tragic conflict in the context of a region moving towards greater peace and respect for human rights. But there simply are no shortcuts. We hope that those who share our hopes for peace between a secure and sovereign Israel and Palestine will join us in redoubling our common efforts to encourage and support the resumption of direct negotiations.

While we agree with our fellow Council members — and indeed with the wider world — about the folly and illegitimacy of continued Israeli settlement activity, we think it unwise for this Council to attempt to resolve the core issues that divide Israelis and Palestinians. Therefore, regrettably, we have opposed this draft resolution.

Sir Mark Lyall Grant (United Kingdom): I am delivering this statement on behalf of the United Kingdom, France and Germany.

The United Kingdom, France and Germany are seriously concerned about the current stalemate in the Middle East peace process. We each voted in favour of the draft Security Council resolution because our views on settlements, including in East Jerusalem, are clear: they are illegal under international law, are an obstacle to peace and constitute a threat to a two-State solution. All settlement activity, including in East Jerusalem, should cease immediately.

Our primary goal remains a just and lasting resolution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. We will continue to work actively to turn this ambition into reality: the creation of a sovereign, independent, democratic, contiguous and viable Palestinian State, living in peace and security side by side with Israel. Our views are clearly set out in the European Union Foreign Affairs Council conclusions, most recently in December 2009 and December 2010.

We believe that Israel's security and the realization of the Palestinians' right to statehood are not opposing goals. On the contrary, they are intimately entwined objectives. We therefore call on both parties to return as soon a possible to direct negotiations towards a two-State solution on the basis of clear parameters.

For those negotiations to be successful, they will need to achieve an agreement on the borders of the two States, based on 4 June 1967 lines, with equivalent land swaps as may be agreed between the parties. They will need to achieve security arrangements that for Palestinians respect their sovereignty and show that the occupation is over, and for Israelis protect their security, prevent the resurgence of terrorism and deal effectively with new and emerging threats. The negotiations must achieve a just, fair and agreed solution to the refugee question, and they must fulfill the aspirations of both parties for Jerusalem. A way must be found through negotiations to resolve the status of Jerusalem as the future capital of both States.

Despite the challenges ahead, the key elements of a solution are well known. Thanks to work commended by the international community as a whole, the Palestinian Authority has developed the capacity to run a democratic and peaceful State, founded on the rule of law and living in peace and security with Israel. Further delay will reduce, rather than increase, the prospects for a solution. We therefore look to both parties to return to negotiations as soon as possible on that basis.

Our goal remains an agreement on all final status issues and the welcoming of Palestine as a full Member of the United Nations by September 2011. We will contribute to achieving that goal in any and every way that we can.

Mr. Churkin (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): The Russian Federation voted in favour of the draft resolution. Given our fundamental position, we will not accept any unilateral actions that prejudge the outcome of negotiations on final status issues. We strongly urge the Government of Israel at last to comply with the demands of the international community and to stop settlement activity, which violates the norms of international law and hinders the resumption of Palestinian-Israeli negotiations.

Unfortunately, no unanimity was achieved among Security Council members today, and the draft resolution was not adopted. However, the issue of Israeli settlement activity remains on the agenda, and the urgency of solving the issue will only increase.

As a permanent member of the Security Council and a member of the Quartet of Middle East mediators, Russia consistently continues to advocate a prompt resumption of direct dialogue between the parties by cooperating with regional and international partners in seeking a just and comprehensive peace settlement in the region, in accordance with Security Council resolutions, the Madrid principles and the Arab Peace Initiative.

We hope that by implementing the still relevant Russian proposal to send the first-ever full Security Council mission to the Middle East will be a useful practical contribution towards assisting the peace process.

Mr. Moraes Cabral (Portugal): Portugal's position on Israeli settlements in the occupied Palestinian territory is well known. We have repeatedly stated that settlements, including in East Jerusalem, are illegal under international law and an obstacle to peace. That has also been the consistent position of the European Union. So it would not surprise the Council if my statement follows that of France, Germany and the United Kingdom closely.

Settlements thwart attempts to move the negotiations process forward. They also erode the prerequisites of the two-State solution, a goal to which we remain firmly committed. All settlement activities in East Jerusalem and the rest of the West Bank, including natural growth, should cease immediately.

Our ultimate goal remains that of a lasting, just and comprehensive peace in the Middle East, based on the creation of a sovereign, independent, democratic, contiguous and viable Palestinian State living side by side with Israel and its other neighbours in peace and security.

Therefore, we call on both parties to return as soon as possible to direct negotiations towards an agreement on all core issues by September 2011. The parameters of a final status agreement are known to all, namely, a Palestinian State based on the 4 June 1967 borders; a security arrangement that fully respects the sovereignty of the Palestinian State, while protecting the security of both Palestinians and Israelis; Jerusalem as the capital of the two States, in accordance with modalities to be negotiated between the parties on its status; and finally, a just, fair and agreed solution to the refugee problem.

The Palestinian Authority has worked diligently in preparing for statehood. In doing so, it has proved itself a dependable partner and demonstrated its capacity to assume full sovereignty as an independent, democratic and peaceful State living in peace with Israel.

As I have previously stated, it is essential that the parties urgently resume direct negotiations. Our aim is an agreement on all final status issues. With that in mind, we look forward to active international and regional diplomatic efforts so that we can indeed welcome Palestine as a full Member of the United Nations by September 2011.

Mr. Li Baodong (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): China voted in favor of the draft resolution drawn up by Arab States on the Israeli settlements. We deeply regret that the draft resolution was not adopted.

China has always firmly supported the just cause of the Palestinian people to gain legitimate national rights. At present, Israel continues to build settlements, which has become a major obstacle to mutual trust and the resumption of peace talks between Palestine and Israel.

China resolutely opposes Israel's construction of settlements and the separation wall in the occupied Palestinian territory, including the West Bank and East Jerusalem. We firmly support the legitimate demands of the Palestinian people. China has always maintained that, on the basis of the relevant United Nations resolutions, the principle of land for peace, the Arab Peace Initiative and the Road Map to Middle East peace, Palestine and Israel should conduct dialogue and negotiations to settle differences so as to ultimately establish an independent State of Palestine, with the two countries living side by side in peace.

China supports the Security Council playing its due role in the Middle East peace process. We also hope that the Quartet meeting to be held on the question of the Middle East will achieve a positive outcome and will help break the stalemate in the Middle East process.

Mr. Sangqu (South Africa): My delegation regrets that the Council was unable to adopt the draft resolution before it today. South Africa voted in favour of the draft resolution, as we joined those that believe that the illegal Israeli settlement activity has become an obstacle to moving the peace process forward.

The continued illegal settlement-building changes the geographical composition of Palestine and has the potential to render the desire to bring about a two-State solution impossible, which is in line with the overwhelming call for the creation of the sovereign, independent, viable and contiguous State of Palestine, coexisting peacefully alongside the State of Israel on the basis of the 1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital.

The Council has an obligation to ensure that the peace process moves forward and that a final settlement can be reached between the parties. The Council should therefore respond to obstacles, such as the illegal settlement activity, which hampers the peace process, and thus poses a threat to international peace and security.

Despite the failure of the Council to act, the peace process must move forward after today. Both parties are still under the obligation to comply with their previous agreements and obligations in terms of the Quartet Road Map, which includes those on illegal settlements. In that regard, we call on Israel to immediately and completely cease all settlement activities in the occupied Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem.

The draft resolution called on the parties to continue their negotiations on final status issues, which include questions on Jerusalem, settlements, borders and refugees. It is imperative that the parties do not abandon the path of negotiations. We in the international community have an obligation to support the parties in their endeavour to reach that goal.

Mr. Osorio (Colombia) (*spoke in Spanish*): In noting the results of the voting on the draft resolution submitted for the Council's consideration, on which Colombia voted in favour, I would like to reaffirm my country's conviction that the appropriate path to achieve a lasting peace between the peoples of Israel and Palestine and the coexistence of the two States is a negotiated solution, not hostile confrontation.

We voted in favour of the draft resolution, as we have done on other occasions on this issue, because we believe that settlements contravene international law and do not comply with the agreements under the Road Map and the negotiations promoted by the Quartet.

We support bilateral, direct negotiations between Palestinians and Israelis as the only possible way to resolve the existing differences. We share the vision of the creation of two democratic States living in peace and with defined, recognized and safe borders. We firmly believe in the need for both parties to act in keeping with international law and to comply with their respective commitments and obligations.

For Colombia the fundamental principles in the peaceful settlement of disputes are the obligation not to use force in international relations, and the free determination of peoples. Israelis and Palestinians cannot continue to be bogged down in confrontation without confidence. We vigorously call on them to maintain and intensify the talks between the parties on the basis of mutual respect and recognition of the identity and rights of each people. The Palestinians have the right to their own State that lives in peace with Israel and progresses toward common prosperity.

Ms. Čolaković (Bosnia and Herzegovina): Bosnia and Herzegovina voted for the draft resolution, and I wish to explain our position.

Bosnia and Herzegovina is and will remain committed to the two-State solution, with the State of Israel and an independent, democratic and viable State of Palestine living side by side in peace and security. We consider that to be a basic precondition for achieving lasting peace and security in the region.

One of the main obstacles to achieving that goal is the settlement activities on occupied land, which are illegal under international law and are contrary to Israel's obligation under the Road Map. Bosnia and Herzegovina calls upon Israel to respond positively to appeals by the international community and end all settlement activities in occupied Palestinian territories, including Jerusalem.

Furthermore, we urge the parties to take the necessary decision to overcome the current obstacles in the peace process as the only way to secure a better future for their peoples through a resumption of direct talks.

Mr. Onemola (Nigeria): This Council has consistently expressed concern over the situation in the Middle East, including the continued Israeli settlement activities in the West Bank and East Jerusalem. This issue is of serious concern to my delegation because of its implication for peace and security in the region. We view the cessation of settlement activities as a confidence-building measure with the potential to return the parties to the negotiating table. We therefore felt constrained to vote in favour of the draft resolution, and we regret that it was not adopted.

We reiterate that it is time for the parties to this dispute to demonstrate their undivided commitment to peace. They should remove all obstacles to the resumption of direct negotiations to resolve persistent permanent status issues. The Council, for its part, should continue its supporting role in the peace process, fostering security and stability within the occupied Palestinian territory.

For our part, we shall remain firmly committed to the goal of seeing a secure State of Israel living side by side in peace and security with an independent State of Palestine with recognized borders.

While peace in the Middle East is attainable, it must come on the back of sustained political will and commitment. The Middle East needs peace. The world needs peace.

Mr. Manjeev Singh Puri (India): Consistent with our long-standing position of solidarity with the Palestinian people and our position that the settlements in the occupied Palestinian territories are illegal under international law, India co-sponsored the draft resolution and voted in its favour. It is our sincere hope and expectation that wiser counsel will prevail among the parties concerned and that the path of dialogue will be the path followed to realize peace in the region.

Even though the Council today could not adopt the resolution, we expect that the sentiments expressed by its members will impel the parties to serious introspection and to the realization that the only way to resolve the problem is to restart talks on all pending issues so that a lasting peace is established and that — as mentioned by many in the Council today — by September 2011 we can welcome to the international community an independent, viable and united State of Palestine, living within secure and recognized borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital, side by side and at peace with Israel.

Mr. Moungara Moussotsi (Gabon) (*spoke in French*): My delegation voted in favour of the draft resolution submitted by the non-aligned countries to encourage the two parties to resume direct talks with a view to a lasting peace in the Middle East. We thus invite the State of Israel and Palestine to overcome all differences and to come to an agreement with a view to resuming direct negotiations and to work towards a just and lasting peace, with the ultimate goal of creating a Palestinian State living side by side with Israel within secure and internationally recognized borders.

The President: I shall now make a statement in my national capacity as representative of Brazil.

The peaceful resolution of the question of Palestine is, arguably, the single most important objective for peace and stability in the world. For its part, the continued expansion of Israeli settlements in the occupied Palestinian territory became the most important obstacle to concrete progress in negotiations leading to a just and durable solution to this question. It is therefore only natural that the Security Council deal with this issue in a manner consistent with its primary responsibility for international peace and security. We welcome an increased engagement by the international community, including through the Security Council, in this matter.

The draft resolution that we had before us today restated that all Israeli settlement activities in the occupied Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem, are illegal and constitute a major obstacle to the achievement of peace on the basis of the two-State solution. It recalled Israel's obligations under the Road Map endorsed by resolution 1515 (2003). It also called for the immediate resumption of credible negotiations.

Brazil co-sponsored the draft resolution not only because we fully agreed with its content, but also because we firmly believe it could help us achieve the two-State solution and therefore contribute to the long-term security and stability of the whole region, including Israel. In seeking to advance the peace process, we also have in mind Israel's right to live in security, free of attacks and threats to its existence. Brazil and Israel are good friends and important partners, both bilaterally and through MERCOSUR.

We also co-sponsored the draft resolution because its adoption would have sent some urgent key messages. The first is that continued disregard for international obligations relating to settlement construction poses a threat to peace and security in the region. Second, halting settlement activities should be seen not as a concession but as the lawful conduct under international law. Third, unilateral action shall not prevail. Upholding international law is always in the interest of peace. The Security Council cannot settle for less.

Over the years, Brazil has supported the fulfillment of the legitimate aspirations of the Palestinian people for a cohesive, secure, democratic and economically viable State within the 1967 borders and with East Jerusalem as its capital, living side by side and in peace with the State of Israel. As we have strengthened our diplomatic relations with all countries in the region, we have also deepened our commitment to stability in the Middle East, our condemnation of all forms of terrorism and our conviction that the peace process must be accelerated.

Brazil's recent recognition of the Palestinian State is fully consistent with our willingness to contribute to a just and lasting solution to the question of Palestine. As explicitly indicated at that time, that decision did not mean abandoning the conviction that negotiations between Israelis and Palestinians are indispensable. On the contrary, we see it as a stimulus for further negotiations. Only dialogue and peaceful coexistence with all neighbours can truly advance the Palestinian cause.

Many years of negotiating efforts have produced a substantial basis upon which progress can be achieved. It is our hope that the more intensive schedule of meetings of the Quartet indicates a willingness to take concrete steps that will lead to an agreement on the final status issues by September.

We believe that the inclusion of more countries in the peace process, including developing countries from outside the region and with good relations with all parties, would bring a breath of fresh air to the peace process. Brazil stands ready to participate in and support those efforts. We have been making our contribution to the Palestinian Authority's State-building efforts, including through bilateral and IBSA — India, Brazil and South Africa — cooperation.

In times of unprecedented change in the Middle East, it is even more urgent that progress be made on the Israeli-Palestinian peace process. Now more than ever, the brighter the perspectives for Palestinian statehood, the greater the chances that the region will advance more steadily towards stability and democracy.

Halting the construction of settlements would be a clear signal of political will to engage in serious negotiations. To achieve an agreement, difficult political decisions will be required. Brazil is confident that the Israeli and the Palestinian leadership will display statesmanship and will be ready to make the painful concessions needed for the next generations to enjoy the benefits of peace.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

I give the floor to the Permanent Observer of Palestine.

Mr. Mansour (Palestine): I wish to thank you, Madame President, for convening this important meeting. I wish to express our deep appreciation for your principled, sincere efforts in this process in your national capacity and in your capacity as the President of the Security Council this month.

I also wish to thank Bosnia and Herzegovina for its skilled stewardship of the Security Council in January, particularly during the Council's open debate on 19 January (see S/PV.6470 and Resumption 1) and throughout the series of consultations undertaken on the draft resolution on Israeli settlements in the occupied Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem, on which the Council has just taken action.

At this time, I also wish to express Palestine's deep appreciation and gratitude to Lebanon, the Arab representative on the Security Council, for its principled efforts and unwavering support throughout this important exercise.

We also wish to thank the Arab Group for their serious consideration of this matter, their constant coordination and their strong support. We express appreciation for the able leadership of the Chairs of the Arab Group since we began this exercise in December 2010. In that context, we also extend our appreciation to the important and sincere efforts of the Arab League Follow-up Committee and its Chair, Qatar, at all levels in the region, in Cairo and here in New York.

We must also express our appreciation and gratitude to the members of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) and the Organization of the Islamic Conference and to the Chairs, Egypt and Tajikistan, for their sincere efforts and their valuable support and solidarity with Palestine. In that regard, we also convey our thanks to the members of the NAM caucus of the Security Council for their consideration and support on this most important issue.

Of course, Palestine also wishes to extend its deep gratitude to all of the countries that co-sponsored the draft resolution, from all corners of the world — from Africa, Asia, Europe and Latin America. Their strong and principled support was invaluable and illustrated to us once again the importance, weight and necessity of a collective effort and position in our work in the international arena as we strive to uphold international law and make peace and justice a reality.

When we decided to come to the Security Council to address the critical and dangerous issue of Israel's ongoing illegal settlement campaign throughout the occupied Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem, we did so with a sensible draft resolution reflecting agreed language and principles. That represented a responsible and serious attempt on our part, along with the entire international community, to address the issue of illegal Israeli settlement activities in order to remove that obstacle from the path of the peace process.

Our overarching goals remain to bring an end to the Israeli colonization and occupation of our land and its destruction of the two-State solution, and to create the appropriate environment and dynamics for the conduct and ultimate success of genuine peace negotiations for the achievement of the two-State solution for peace in accordance with the relevant Security Council resolutions, the Madrid principles, including the principle of land for peace, the Arab Peace Initiative and the Quartet Road Map.

Unfortunately, however, the Security Council has failed to uphold its responsibilities to respond to the crisis in the long search for peace and security in the Middle East and to legislate the existing global consensus in demanding that Israel, the occupying Power, immediately and completely cease all settlement activities in the occupied Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem.

We reiterate that it is high time to send a clear and firm message to Israel that it must comply with its international legal obligations, including in accordance with the relevant Security Council resolutions, and cease all of its violations and its obstruction of the peace process.

Israel, the occupying Power, should not question the determination of the international community to bring an end to those violations, including its illegal settlement campaign, including in occupied East Jerusalem. The proper message that should have been sent by the Security Council to Israel, the occupying Power, is that its contempt of international law and the international community will no longer be tolerated.

We fear, however, that the message sent today may be one that only encourages further Israeli intransigence and impunity. That must be remedied. Otherwise, we will face a situation in which Israel's illegal, reckless and expansionist campaign will put in final jeopardy the prospects for achieving our collective goal, the goal that will bring peace and security to our region: the two-State solution for the peace of an independent and viable State of Palestine living side by side with Israel on the basis of the 1967 borders.

Despite the negative outcome today — and of course, we appreciate the positive votes of the 14 countries that voted in favour — we are calling and will continue to call on the Security Council to uphold its duties and responsibilities vis-à-vis the question of Palestine, because we believe in international law and in the central role of the Council in maintaining international peace and security. The Council must undertake this role seriously and consciously in the Middle East in its ongoing attempts to resolve the Arab-Israeli conflict, the core of which remains the Palestinian-Israeli conflict.

The situation on the ground in the occupied Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem, is intolerable and the status quo is untenable. We must continue to uphold our duties towards our people and our just cause, and will thus continue to consider all of our options at the United Nations in order to address all of the critical issues we face and to promote the achievement of a just, lasting and comprehensive peace settlement. We do this with full conviction and commitment, and with deepest gratitude and appreciation to all the member States of the international community whose support and solidarity in this long search for peace have been so vital and unwavering.

The Palestinian people and their leadership will not forgo their legitimate national aspirations and will not cease their honourable efforts to achieve a peaceful resolution of this conflict in all its aspects. This includes, foremost, bringing a complete end to the Israeli occupation of the Palestinian land that began in 1967 and the achievement of the inalienable right of the Palestinian people to self-determination in their independent State of Palestine, with East Jerusalem as its capital, where they can live as a dignified and proud people, enjoying peace, freedom, democracy, security and prosperity in their homeland.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Israel.

Mr. Reuben (Israel): Direct negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians have been, and still remain, the only way forward to resolve the long-standing conflict in our region. Therefore, the draft resolution that was before the Council should never have been submitted. Instead, the international community and the Security Council should have called upon the Palestinian leadership, in a clear and resolute voice, to immediately return to the negotiating table without preconditions and to renew direct negotiations in order to resolve all outstanding issues. This is the way to achieve peace. Indeed, this is the path through which we have reached peace agreements in the past.

Today's debate will not assist efforts to bring both sides back to the negotiating table. In fact, this process, in its adversarial nature, is likely to harm ongoing attempts to resume negotiations. It sends the wrong message to the Palestinians, signalling that they can avoid the negotiating table.

Time and time again, Israel has demonstrated its willingness to take significant steps — indeed, painful steps — to rebuild confidence between the two sides. However, these efforts were not met with similar steps by the other side. Furthermore, Israel's withdrawal from the Gaza Strip in 2005, including the painful dismantling of all settlements, has led to an increase in terror and violence from the areas that we left.

However, Israel continues to demonstrate its willingness to renew talks, with the express goal of resolving all outstanding issues. Prime Minister Netanyahu has called upon the Palestinian leadership to return to the negotiating table and engage in peace talks in good faith. This goal is within reach, but will require painful compromises. The road to peace lies between Jerusalem and Ramallah, which are only 10 minutes apart.

In the Declaration of Principles and the Israeli-Palestinian Interim Agreement on the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, settlements are but one of the outstanding issues that both sides have explicitly agreed to address as part of final status negotiations. Any effort to predetermine a central, permanent State issue in effect prejudges what was agreed to be directly negotiated between the two sides.

Furthermore, it is not fitting or constructive to isolate this single issue from all other core matters, such as the security arrangements, refugees and incitement, as well as the need to address the relentless rocket fire on Israel by Hamas, which controls the Gaza Strip.

As the Middle East continues to undergo dramatic and historic changes, one wonders whether the issue before us is really the most relevant for discussion in this Chamber.

In conclusion, we would like to thank the United States for its long-standing and responsible leadership in this process. Its vote today reflects the understanding that the only way forward is through direct negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians. We reiterate our call to the Palestinian leadership to return to the negotiating table without preconditions, so that negotiations can resume without further delay.

The President: There are no more speakers inscribed on my list. The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The meeting rose at 5 p.m.

United Nations

S/PV.6485

Security Council

Sixty-sixth year

Provisional

6485th meeting

Tuesday, 22 February 2011, 10 a.m.
New York

***President*:**	Mrs. Viotti	(Brazil)
***Members*:**	Bosnia and Herzegovina	Mr. Barbalić
	China	Mr. Li Baodong
	Colombia	Ms. Duarte-Rodriguez
	France	Mr. Briens
	Gabon	Mr. Moungara Moussotsi
	Germany	Mr. Wittig
	India	Mr. Hardeep Singh Puri
	Lebanon	Ms. Ziade
	Nigeria	Mr. Onemola
	Portugal	Mr. Moraes Cabral
	Russian Federation	Mr. Dolgov
	South Africa	Mr. Sangqu
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Parham
	United States of America	Mr. Dunn

Agenda

The situation in Timor-Leste

Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste (for the period from 21 September 2010 to 7 January 2011) (S/2011/32)

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room U-506.

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The meeting was called to order at 10.30 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in Timor-Leste

Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste (for the period from 21 September 2010 to 7 January 2011) (S/2011/32)

The President: Under rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I should like to invite the representatives of Timor-Leste, Japan, New Zealand, the Philippines and Australia to participate in this meeting.

On behalf of the members of the Council, I wish to welcome His Excellency Mr. Kay Rala Xanana Gusmão, Prime Minister and Minister of Defence and Security of Timor-Leste.

Under rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I shall take it that the Council decides to invite Ms. Ameerah Haq, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and head of the United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste.

It is so decided.

Under rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite His Excellency Mr. Pedro Serrano, Acting Head of the delegation of the European Union to the United Nations.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

Members of the Council have before them document S/2011/32, which contains the report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste.

I now give the floor to Ms. Ameerah Haq.

Ms. Haq: Thank you, Madame President, for the opportunity to introduce the report of the Secretary-General (S/2011/32) on the United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste (UNMIT), which covers the period 21 September 2010 to 7 January 2011.

I would like to acknowledge the presence in the Chamber of Prime Minister Kay Rala Xanana Gusmão. Under his leadership, as well as that of President José Ramos-Horta and other leaders, Timor-Leste has continued to make progress, both in advancing peace and stability and in promoting development. I would also like to acknowledge the presence of Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs Alberto Carlos and of Secretary of State for Security Francisco Guterres.

The Secretary-General's report notes that the security and political situation in Timor-Leste continues to be stable. With the responsibilities of the Policia Nacional de Timor-Leste (PNTL) gradually increasing, overall crime rates have remained low and do not indicate any politically related violence, thus reflecting a general desire for peace, stability and unity at all levels of society. While the Alliance for a Parliamentary Majority Government coalition and opposition parties have their differences, as is common in any multiparty democracy, they continue to channel those differences through established democratic institutions and processes. Timorese leaders at the national, district and community levels and across the political spectrum, while recognizing that there are still significant challenges ahead, including the presidential and parliamentary elections planned for 2012, are optimistic that the current peaceful situation can be maintained through the end of 2012 and beyond.

I share this optimism that Timor-Leste's progress can be maintained if all political leaders and the broader public continue to act in a responsible manner and the security situation remains stable. This is a sentiment that I hear voiced by people residing in the neighbourhoods of Dili, as well as in villages outside the capital. They have concerns, of course, particularly regarding unemployment and poverty, which remain high and widespread. But there is hope that ongoing socio-economic development efforts will help tackle those conditions. Meanwhile, the capital, Dili, has become a city bustling with commercial activity, which is in stark contrast to just two or three years ago. I would like to congratulate the leaders and people of Timor-Leste for these positive developments.

With regard to policing, the completion of the resumption of primary policing responsibilities by the PNTL in all districts and units is on the horizon. I am confident that this process can be finalized in the coming months, given the continuing commitment of the Government and the PNTL. Since the report's closing date of 7 January, the joint Government-UNMIT team that reviews the readiness of districts and units has recommended for resumption the districts of

Bobonaro and Covalima, as well as three additional units, including the Department of Justice, which is responsible for police disciplinary investigations. Only Dili district, which continues to face challenges in meeting the mutually agreed criteria, and three other units are pending further assessment.

Once the PNTL has resumed primary policing responsibilities in all districts and units, responsibility for the conduct and the command and control of all policing operations in Timor-Leste will move from the UNMIT Police Commissioner to the PNTL General Commander. That will signal a new phase in the development of PNTL — the beginning of the reconstitution phase, during which UNMIT police will primarily focus on further institutional strengthening and capacity-building of the PNTL. This phase will be critical to ensuring the readiness and ability of the PNTL to guarantee public security throughout the country in advance of the eventual withdrawal of UNMIT. The reconstitution phase will be governed by arrangements set out in an exchange of letters, the broad principles of which have been agreed to and which will be signed by the Prime Minister and myself.

As I mentioned earlier, the reconstitution phase will mark a shift in the responsibilities of the UNMIT police. One of the critical tasks for UNMIT will be to help ensure that the PNTL establishes itself as a professional and impartial national police service that enjoys the trust of the Timorese people and is capable of guaranteeing public security, with due respect for human rights and the rule of law. The performance of the PNTL during the reconstitution phase, including the crucial period of national elections in 2012, and future assessments will determine when full reconstitution can be declared.

It is indeed promising that, to date, there have been no significant spikes or increases in incidents of violence in districts where PNTL has already resumed its role. However, I remain concerned about the continued high levels of domestic violence and sporadic fighting incidents among youth groups and martial arts groups in the country. As the report of the Secretary-General notes, UNMIT and the country team are actively supporting the efforts of the Secretary of State for the Promotion of Equality and others to raise awareness of the law against domestic violence among all segments of society. We also continue to emphasize the importance of a community policing approach in addressing these issues.

Working jointly with PNTL counterparts and relevant Government authorities, UNMIT police are already planning for the reconstitution phase to ensure that its support focuses on the five priority areas for further strengthening outlined in the strategic development plan of the PNTL for 2011-2012. Those are legislation, training, administration, discipline and operations. As I conveyed in my address to the Security Council on 19 October 2010 (see S/PV.6405), I once again appeal to and encourage police-contributing countries to provide officers to UNMIT who can effectively transfer skills to PNTL counterparts in those focus areas. With regard to the additional 19 civilian expert posts within the UNMIT police component, I am pleased to report that 18 candidates have already been selected.

One concern noted in the report of the Secretary-General regards the final certification of the 199 PNTL officers with pending criminal or disciplinary issues. The report notes that, in a letter of 28 December 2010 to the Prime Minister and the Minister for Defence and Security, the Secretary of State for Security communicated his decision to certify those 199 uncertified PNTL officers, a significant number of whom face serious disciplinary and criminal charges. While the letter also stated that those officers would not be exempt from any criminal or disciplinary liabilities if found guilty at the outcome of the proceedings, I submitted a letter to Prime Minister Xanana Gusmão on 3 February in which I expressed the concerns of the United Nations about the Government's decision, noting its possible negative impact on the overall integrity of the PNTL. I also urged the Government and judicial authorities to take the necessary measures to resolve expeditiously all outstanding cases involving suspicions of human rights violations or criminal conduct. In making those appeals, I am convinced that the Government of Timor-Leste and UNMIT share the same goals for a professional PNTL that operates with due respect for the rule of law.

The Falintil-Forças de Defesa de Timor-Leste (F-FDTL) also continued to make further progress in the development of their human resource and institutional capacities, as reflected in the draft F-FDTL force development plan for 2011-2015 and the new F-FDTL force structure, which envisages the recruitment of an additional 600 members, which is currently ongoing. The F-FDTL has also reached an understanding with the Government of Portugal to deploy officers to serve as part of a future Portuguese contingent to peacekeeping operations. Similarly, two PNTL officers have been selected for deployment to the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau. Those are laudable commitments by Timor-Leste to contribute to United Nations work to ensure peace and stability in other parts of the world. In addition, the UNMIT Military Liaison Group will continue to provide support to the F-FDTL in preparing officers for future liaison officer assignments.

One of the three F-FDTL members granted commutations of sentences relating to involvement in the 2006 shooting deaths of eight PNTL members resigned in January. I am concerned that the remaining two continue to serve. Now that the F-FDTL plans to participate in international peacekeeping, it has an even greater responsibility to ensure the integrity and accountability of the force.

With regard to the wider security sector, Timor-Leste, as a sovereign country, continues to make advances in further developing the overarching legislative and policy framework for the sector, as well as various regulations. Subject, of course, to further discussions with the Timor-Leste Government and the concurrence of the Security Council, I propose that, over the next two years, UNMIT concentrate on supporting the further strengthening and development of security institutions, in particular with regard to training on human rights and gender issues, technical legislative drafting, strengthening disciplinary mechanisms and facilitating sharing of best practices. I propose that continued assistance be provided to support civilian oversight institutions, which are responsible for ensuring that the sector meets the needs of the people of Timor-Leste, such as the National Parliament, the Ministry for Defence and Security and the Office of the Provedor for Human Rights and Justice.

In the context of the joint transition process, UNMIT and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) are also exploring, together with the Government, possible joint programmes to support various areas of the security sector, which would depend on funding becoming available.

On 28 January, the National Parliament approved the 2011 State budget after two weeks of debate, which was attended in its entirety by the Prime Minister. It includes various amendments proposed by members of Parliament and totals $1.3 billion. After having referred the proposed budget for judicial review and a Court of Appeal opinion upholding its constitutionality and legality having been issued, the President promulgated the State budget law on 12 February. The $1.3 billion budget represents a nearly 10-fold increase over the budget for the 2005-2006 fiscal year.

The increasing amounts available to the State from its petroleum resources are one of the most striking changes that Timor-Leste has experienced over the years. They are a huge State resource available for investment in the future of the people of Timor-Leste.

However, as the State budget increases, there is a need to ensure adequate governance practices to ensure effective budget implementation, including in such areas as procurement and auditing. It is also important that adequate resources are allocated in critical social sectors, such as education and health, and for vulnerable groups, including women and children. Investment in human capital, particularly in young people, will improve the lives of the population and provide greater economic dividends down the road. Adequate investment in rural areas, where about 80 per cent of the population resides, and a focus on increasing employment opportunities for young people, will bring more equitable benefits and increased stability.

I welcome that the National Parliament increased, by $1 million, allocations to the 2011 State budget for various initiatives to combat domestic violence, including support to vulnerable persons and victims of domestic violence. The Government readily agreed to these proposed increases, demonstrating the widely shared commitment to addressing this troubling issue.

The Government is aware of the challenges associated with an expanding budget and continues efforts to address them. I hope that new and ongoing initiatives, such as the National Development Agency and programmes focused on district-level development, will further Government efforts to guarantee responsible spending. I also hope that investment in social and rural sectors will be taken into consideration by the National Parliament when it examines the draft National Strategic Development Plan. Increased focus on these areas will also facilitate achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). This year, the Government will initiate the MDG suco fund, an innovative approach of delegating to and empowering people at the village level to assist in achieving the MDGs. Preparations are under way for the next national MDG steering committee meeting scheduled for early March.

I hope that these measures will contribute to enhancing strategies to meet MDG targets, particularly those relating to nutrition, child health and maternal mortality. At the same time, significant progress has been achieved in other areas, with Timor-Leste having already met MDG targets for a reduction in infant and under-five mortality and to ensure antenatal care coverage. The country is also on track to achieve the MDGs in such areas as primary school enrolment, the proportion of births attended by skilled health personnel and access to safe drinking water.

As already mentioned, some of the main political challenges ahead are the national presidential and parliamentary elections in 2012. Electoral management bodies have demonstrated increasing capacity over the years. However, the Government has indicated that it would require continued United Nations electoral support through the 2012 elections, although less support would be needed than in 2007. The nature and extent of this support was reviewed by a needs assessment mission conducted by the Department of Political Affairs Division of Electoral Affairs and UNDP from 7 to 17 February. Continued electoral support through the integrated UNMIT and UNDP election support team will contribute to credible elections, as has been discussed in the context of the joint transition strategy. Such assistance will require further donor support.

On 14 February, the National Parliament once again voted to postpone discussion of the two draft laws on reparations and on a follow-up institution to the Commission for Reception, Truth and Reconciliation (CAVR) and the Commission of Truth and Friendship (CTF), to be called the institute of memory. I encourage Parliament to resume discussions on these important initiatives as soon as possible. In that connection, I note that the Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances, which concluded an official mission to Timor-Leste at the invitation of the Government on 14 February, referred to these draft laws as important steps in the implementation of the CAVR/CTF recommendations. It also considered the proposed establishment of the institute of memory as a major step forward in truth recovery.

On 27 and 29 January, Timor-Leste successfully hosted the fifth meeting of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Regional Forum of Experts and Eminent Persons, co-chairing the forum with Thailand. In his keynote address to the meeting, Timor-Leste's Foreign Minister indicated that the country was in the process of making a formal application to become a member of ASEAN. Indonesia's support for Timor-Leste's desire to join ASEAN during its presidency in 2011 reflects the continuing good relationship between the two countries. I would also like to recognize the continuing contribution of the international security forces of Australia and New Zealand, with which UNMIT continues to enjoy good cooperation.

On 1 February, the meeting of the High-Level Committee on Transition, hosted by the President, was attended by UNMIT and Government delegations, led respectively by the Prime Minister and myself. The Government designated the Deputy Prime Minister as its overall focal point for the transition, as well as its other focal points for the seven technical working groups. As agreed at that meeting, a transition plan is being jointly drafted with the Government. Discussions at that meeting focused on justice, the rule of law and human rights, as well as on the economic impact of UNMIT's withdrawal and on training programmes that UNMIT established for its national staff. The Committee agreed on the technical assistance from UNMIT desired by the Government over the next two years.

The Government also agreed that a session of the next Timor-Leste development partners' meeting in July will be devoted to a discussion of the transition plan. This will be an important opportunity for bilateral and multilateral partners to present their views on the plan as well as to obtain further information on Timor-Leste's requirements through the transition period and following UNMIT's departure, which can feed into their own assistance plans.

The focus of the transition period is on capacity-building and other measures to support the further strengthening and development of Timorese institutions, particularly with regard to the priority areas of UNMIT's mandate — democratic governance, the rule of law, justice and human rights, the security sector and socio-economic development. UNMIT is also redoubling its efforts to further develop the capacities of its own national staff and staff in key offices within State and Government institutions to further enhance their capacities to make continued meaningful contributions to the development of Timor-Leste. Given the strong commitment of the Government of Timor-Leste to the transition, our aim is ensure a smooth and successful UNMIT withdrawal, which hopefully can also serve as a best practice for other peacekeeping missions.

Let me recap by saying that Timor-Leste is now entering a period that will be an important indicator of the durability of advances made since 2006, particularly in the security sector as PNTL becomes responsible for its own command-and-control arrangements. However, there will also be other tests in the run-up to the 2012 elections. Leaders of political parties will need to continue to responsibly express and deal with their differences through democratic institutions and processes. Access to the justice system needs to improve so that all segments of the population will be able to benefit, especially those in rural areas and women. The Government will have to continue efforts to ensure effective and transparent use of the increased budgeted resources available to it. All institutions and leaders will need to continue to show that progress to date results from measures, processes and commitments that can be sustained in the long term. Considering current circumstances, I am hopeful that, with the combined efforts of the Government, all political parties and leaders and all communities and people of Timor-Leste, these remaining challenges can be met.

In conclusion, let me thank my two deputies, Finn Reske-Nielsen and Shigeru Mochida, and all of the United Nations personnel in Timor-Leste. I would also like to thank the leadership of Timor-Leste and, again, Prime Minister Gusmão, with whom I am here today. Finally, allow me to pay tribute to and to thank the people of Timor-Leste for their resilience and determination to establish a stable and enduring peace and sustainable development for their country.

The President: I thank Ms. Ameerah Haq for her briefing.

I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Kay Rala Xanana Gusmão.

Mr. Gusmão (Timor-Leste) (*spoke in Portuguese; English text provided by the delegation*): First and foremost, on behalf of the people I represent, please allow me to thank the Security Council and its permanent members, as well as all others who have walked in the Chamber, for the generosity and concern that they have shown in their resolutions on Timor-Leste. After more than five years, I must say that it is a great pleasure to be back here at United Nations Headquarters.

I must also recall that in May 2006 then Minister for Foreign Affairs of Timor-Leste Ramos-Horta came before the Council to plead for the support that our people needed, at a time when intolerance trumped constructive dialogue, so that we might find proper solutions. My presence here today follows that SOS we sent out five years ago.

I am also pleased to be accompenied by Special Representative of the Secretary-General Ameerah Haq. It is thanks to her commitment and dedicated leadership of the United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste (UNMIT) that the relationship between Timor-Leste and the United Nations remains as strong as ever.

I am also honour-bound to thank my good friend Mr. Atul Khare for everything he did, in very trying circumstances, both for the Timorese and for the Mission he led. He always showed great responsibility and care in his work, as well as great understanding and cooperation, so that together we could achieve our duty of restoring confidence in the Timorese society. Since UNMIT's establishment, in 2006, both President Ramos-Horta and Vice-Prime Minister José Luís Guterres, as well as Mr. Atul Khare and Ms. Ameerah Haq, have reported to the Security Council on the progress achieved in Timor-Leste.

I would like to highlight a few of the steps we have taken since the five-party coalition Government I lead entered office on 8 August 2007. For the first two years, we focused our efforts on restoring peace and stability and on solving most of the social and political problems created by the 2006 crisis, which continued up to 2008. We have been implementing structural reforms with regard to the management of State administration. We are also creating systems and structures to ensure good governance and continuing to provide support for building the capacity of both institutions and justice sector personnel. We are implementing social policies in order to reduce the imbalances in our society, taking into account the physical, moral and psychological damage caused by a war that lasted 24 years. We are nurturing structured policies on education, health and agriculture. And we are promoting a coherent economic policy throughout the country with regard to our nascent national private sector.

The restoration of peace and stability in the country was primarily a result of the reforms started in the Policia Nacional de Timor-Leste (PNTL) and the Falintil-Forças de Defesa de Timor-Leste (F-FDTL), which by 2008 finally ended the cycle of friction, overcoming the petty differences that divided both institutions. Since the joint operation in 2008, the PNTL and F-FDTL have been activated here and there to continue the exercise to restore normality in the country, in full compliance with the values of a democratic State under the rule of law.

While one of the main factors in the 2006 crisis was the inability of State bodies to manage problems collectively, in February 2008, at a time of extreme gravity and threat against the constitutional order, we saw all State institutions working in a coordinated manner and in close collaboration, thereby meeting all legal and constitutional requirements for overcoming that prolonged crisis. The result was the creation of a political precedent of enormous significance and scope, which shows to the Timorese that there are proper instruments that they can use to save the country from anarchy and disorder.

Nevertheless, I must acknowledge the extremely important role played by civil society, including the Church and non-governmental organizations, as well as political parties, youth and, most of all, our people, in this process of consolidating national unity and stability. In 2009, the year that marked the tenth anniversary of the referendum, this enabled the Government to issue a new motto, namely, "Goodbye Conflict, Welcome Development", which the people embraced with all their hearts.

Thus, on 31 December 2010, after the first decade in which the Timorese people were truly free, we bade farewell to the year in a festive atmosphere, knowing that we were on our way to becoming a friendly and — most of all — tolerant and, of course, peaceful society. It was against that backdrop that fireworks displays were held in Dili to greet the 2011-2020 decade, during which we will be strengthening those values and launching a bolder development period.

I did not come here to praise the progress made by my Government in an effort to correct some reports on Timor-Leste that tend to sound more like verdicts. We regret those reports, but we try to understand the respective rationales behind them. I also did not come here to underestimate the difficulties and the challenges that still lie ahead of us.

We are aware that we still have many needs as a nation. We are fully aware of the efforts that we will have to make in order to build State and country. Still, we have not been alone in meeting those challenges, for we have benefited from the generosity and support of nations from all over the world. The members of the Council represent that generosity and support, as you represent the countries from throughout the world. We therefore continue to strengthen and gradually expand our ties of solidarity with friendly countries from various continents and with different histories, beliefs and ethnicities.

Most of all, we are taking our due place in our region. We are currently formalizing our application for membership in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) during the Indonesian presidency of that regional forum. We believe that having Timor-Leste join ASEAN during the Indonesian presidency will have great symbolism, not only for Timor-Leste and Indonesia but also for all the members of the Association.

We are continuing to strengthen our relationship with other friends in the Asia-Pacific region, including China, Japan, South Korea, Australia and New Zealand. Timor-Leste is also strongly committed to the Community of Portuguese-speaking Countries, which has members around the world.

We also have ties of cooperation with India, where dozens of Timorese are studying in the areas of information technology and oil.

We are also fortunate to have strong support and assistance from the European Union and its member States. After this important visit to the United States, I will also be travelling to Cuba, where over 700 Timorese are studying medicine, and to Brazil, a country with which we are also cooperating in several areas.

Timor-Leste is truly committed to engaging in dialogue with several countries so as to enable a critical review of its processes. As a nation, we have received much from the international community. Currently, we hope to be able to reciprocate in a genuine manner and with the same spirit of solidarity by sharing experiences, both sweet and sour, with other fragile countries throughout the world.

As such, in April 2010, we had the honour of hosting the International Dialogue on Peacebuilding and Statebuilding, with the participation of the least developed countries of the Group of Seven Plus (g7+), which is currently chaired by Timor-Leste. The general goal of the g7+ is to awaken leaders and peoples so that they may reacquire ownership of their processes over the long term, without losing sight of each country's characteristics and priorities, and without forgetting to focus on the need for better control over and adjustment to outside help. That would require greater transparency from donors and beneficiaries, which would in turn ensure that external support has a real impact on the development of the countries concerned.

The g7+ is enabling fragile and conflict-affected countries to gather together and speak about themselves, to learn from their mutual experiences and to create new opportunities for facing the future with determination and optimism. The g7+ currently has 17 member countries, representing 350 million people from Africa, Asia, the Caribbean and the Pacific.

For the third consecutive year, Timor-Leste has been involved in the Bali Democracy Forum, which has been gaining participants every year. Such countries as India, Iran, Bangladesh and others have also chosen to make important contributions to the Forum, which shows that the world wants to discuss the subject of democracy. I would like to convey my respect and admiration for my friend Mr. Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, the President of the Republic of Indonesia. Under his leadership, the largest Muslim country in the world is taking steady steps towards consolidating democracy and has managed to bring together, in Bali, representatives of various Governments to discuss the values of peace, non-violence and tolerance, and particularly the connection between democracy and development.

Today, we are witnessing an inevitable movement by societies and peoples who demand freedom of expression and fundamental rights. In the context of current events, the g7+ and the Bali Democracy Forum, people are becoming aware that they must be sovereign in terms of the decisions that concern them, rather than remaining subject to the imposition of the programmes of others and, worse still, to interests that are not their own.

While we Timorese fought alone for 24 years, we never lost sight of what was going on in the world. The objective awareness that the world was changing, both in our region and others, was something that nurtured our aspirations to be free, even in extreme situations. And the world continues to change, fortunately. Against that backdrop, the most important thing is that people are the masters of their own fate.

Changing topics now, but remaining in this world in which we live, the least developed countries, of which Timor-Leste is one, are concerned by the continuous indecisiveness of the large economies in establishing a new economic order. As time passes, that indecisiveness at best generates anxiety, if not despair.

And that is the truth: time goes by, as it has done ever since the first alarms were sounded on climate change, decades ago. Today, all over the world, it is meaningless to talk about preventive measures, since all that can be done is invariably to bury the dead and assess the amount of damage in order to establish funds to alleviate the suffering of people. Thus, countries such as Timor-Leste that yearn for development so as to improve the living conditions of their peoples face one of the worst challenges, namely, uncertainty in view of the adverse effects of the world economic recession and the lack of coherence with regard to measures to save humankind from hunger, disease, poverty and all their consequences.

Accustomed to huge challenges during their lengthy struggle for liberation, the people of Timor-Leste are determined to focus on their development. After a thorough review of the needs and challenges, we are drafting the National Strategic Development Plan, which will be submitted to Parliament for approval. We hope to launch it at the next meeting with our development partners, to take place in Dili in July.

In macroeconomic terms, the National Strategic Development Plan is based on the following paradigm: production, production capabilities and productive employment opportunities. Only by creating employment can we improve the social and economic situation of our people, since only employment can generate income, and income results in the eradication of poverty. For that, the Timorese State will have to invest boldly in basic infrastructure and human capital development.

With the Council's permission, I will again go back to the reasons that brought me here to New York.

On 25 August 2006, in response to a request by the then-Prime Minister of Timor-Leste, the establishment of UNMIT was approved for an initial period of six months, with the possibility of renewal. In December 2006, an additional agreement was signed on the restoration and maintenance of public order. It regulated the relationship between UNMIT and the State of Timor-Leste, transferring leadership of the national and international police to the United Nations police (UNPOL). In parallel, support for the reform, restructuring and rebuilding of the national police of Timor-Leste was also defined. That enabled the registration and certification programme of all PNTL elements to begin, which facilitated the final certification of all members of the police who did not have trials pending for crimes or human rights violations.

Meanwhile, the PNTL promotions system was approved, which established a promotions committee to select PNTL officers and recommend them for promotion. The committee was supported by senior police officers from friendly countries, which made possible the creation of an international jury to give the process greater credibility.

On 14 May 2009, the transfer of executive responsibility from UNPOL to the PNTL began in the various districts. We expect that process to be complete by 27 March — the date of the PNTL's eleventh anniversary — with the handing over of the Dili district command and the PNTL general command. From then on, the PNTL will be responsible for conducting, leading and monitoring all police operations in Timor-Leste.

I acknowledge the concerns stated in the report of the Secretary-General (S/2011/32) with regard to completing certification of the remaining PNTL elements. Here, I only wish to underline the Government's commitment to strengthen command and control and to resolutely implement disciplinary procedures so as to ensure the integrity of our police.

Next year will be very important in the consolidation of the process of building our young State. It will thus be the year when we will hold presidential and parliamentary elections — the third democratic elections in our country. I am confident that they will take place in an atmosphere of calm, as in 2007, when, despite the recent crisis and a few isolated events, the elections took place in full normality throughout the entire territory.

For that, we are ready to continue ensuring the stability of our country. Also to that end, the PNTL will continue to require the assistance of their colleagues at UNPOL, who will undertake only advisory and capacity-building functions in various areas, in accordance with the needs of the Timorese police and the plan already drafted by its general command. That issue should, however, continue to be subject to consultation and coordination with the relevant Timorese authorities.

Allow me to recall that, with regard to legislation, training, administration, discipline and operations, it would of course be ideal if the advisers to the PNTL have technical and professional skills in these fields. If possible, we would like to see the advisers already cooperating in these areas to remain until the end of their mandates.

Under the leadership of our President of the Republic, at high-level meetings involving UNMIT and the Government we will continue to study the post-UNMIT period, that is, the period after the 2012 elections, when UNPOL may start to withdraw.

For the election period — March and April for the presidential elections and June for the parliamentary elections — we seek to draw up a special agreement with UNMIT so as to enable UNPOL to participate jointly with PNTL in the maintenance of public order in our country. In addition, a year in advance, I would like to recall that UNMIT will be requested to provide logistical support to the elections, as it has always done, most recently in the elections for local leaders in 2009. We count on the presence of the international community through international observers, who, we hope, will be present in sufficient numbers to cover the 700 polling stations in order to anticipate any irregularities that may emerge and that we want to avoid.

The United Nations has been present since the start of our nation-building . Therefore, I urge it to remain in solidarity with us in fulfilling the dreams of our people, which today are for peace and development. I thank the United Nations, the Security Council and the entire community of nations for their efforts and support for State-building in Timor-Leste. The Timorese people vow to continue to work hard towards peace and stability in our country. Only by doing so can we help the United Nations to provide due assistance to other countries in crisis that have a greater need for aid than Timor-Leste.

On behalf of all Timorese, I thank all those men and women who have left their families and their countries to be part of the noble mission to assist in the building of Timor-Leste throughout these five long years. I also thank all Governments that were part of the Council during those years and deliberated on the support to Timor-Leste in a spirit of true friendship and solidarity among peoples and nations.

I cannot conclude without congratulating the Governments and peoples of the Sudan for their intelligent embrace of non-violence during the recent referendum process. We know that significant challenges remain in that process. The people of Timor-Leste, who have experienced the devastation of destruction and violence, hope that their Sudanese brothers and sisters, from both the North and South, will continue to engage in dialogue towards a peaceful solution, which is the only way to ensure the integrity and survival of both peoples.

The year 2012 will also mark the tenth anniversary of the restoration of our independence and the realization of our sovereignty. I would like to seize this opportunity to invite all those here today to take part in the celebrations, as we did together back on 20 May 2002.

In conclusion, I would like to thank His Excellency the Secretary-General for his report and for the recommendation to extend the UNMIT mandate for one more year. In the consolidation phase of the PNTL, the reconfiguration of UNPOL is important. I have every confidence that the PNTL will be well assisted in the process of building institutional and human capacity.

(*spoke in English*)

During this time of anguish, it would be remiss of me not to express my sincere and deep sympathy and solidarity with the people and the Government of New Zealand for the second earthquake that has hit Christchurch.

The President: I thank His Excellency Prime Minister Xanana Gusmão for his statement.

I shall now give the floor to the members of the Security Council.

Mr. Hardeep Singh Puri (India): Thank you very much, Madame President, for convening this debate on the situation in Timor-Leste. I would like to start by welcoming His Excellency Prime Minister Kay Rala Xanana Gusmão and thanking him for his very comprehensive statement. I would also like to thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Timor-Leste, Ms. Ameerah Haq, for her comprehensive briefing, and the Secretary-General for his report (S/2011/32).

We are encouraged by Prime Minister Xanana Gusmão's statement that the overall situation in Timor-Leste remains calm and stable and the country is well on its way to long-term peace, stability and development. We would like to record our appreciation for all the political parties for their continued and active engagement in the democratic processes. In order to confront the various challenges that Timor-Leste faces, it is crucial for all the political parties, including the Government and the Frente Revolucionária do Timor-Leste Independente opposition to fully cooperate with each other. This is essential for cementing the foundations of nation-building as well as for socio-economic development in the country.

We are happy to note that the Policia Nacional de Timor-Leste (PNTL) will very soon assume primary policing responsibilities for the entire country. More importantly, the PNTL has demonstrated its ability to incrementally assume policing responsibilities from the United Nations police without any major difficulty. This is essential for sustained peace and stability and for a successful transition.

It is incumbent on the international community and the United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste (UNMIT) to ensure that they remain steadfast in their commitment towards supporting training and capacity-building for the PNTL. We strongly support the efforts of UNMIT to ensure that its police component has the skill sets to support the PNTL in capacity-building as well with their efforts at institutional development. Moving ahead, it is critical that there be a clear delineation of authority and respective fields for the military and police, so that they can effectively discharge their responsibilities under the civilian Government.

The presidential and parliamentary elections scheduled in the first half of 2012 will be major milestones in the consolidation of the democratic transition in Timor-Leste. Also, the elections will be a litmus test of the PNTL readiness for the transition, which is scheduled to take place by the end of 2012. The United Nations must provide technical and logistical support for the smooth conduct of these elections in accordance with the priorities of the Government.

Towards consolidating the progress made so far, it is important that the international community continue to extend assistance and support to the Government's strategy for accelerating the infrastructure development and reconstruction of the country. We have noted with satisfaction that economic growth continues to remain robust, and the 2011 State budget has been quadrupled from that of the 2006 budget.

India attaches great importance to its relations with Timor-Leste. We have sought to contribute to that country's development by providing expertise and training in areas of our competence, and where we see complementarities in their application. India has extended its support to the Government of Timor-Leste, including through assistance for the purchase of equipment and materials related to socio-economic development and in the human resources development sector.

As UNMIT moves into a critical transition phase prior to its departure and the Government assumes full responsibility for various processes, the United Nations system and agencies present in the field must work in a coherent manner towards addressing the long-term needs of the country in accordance with the priorities set by the Government.

We support the recommendation of the Secretary-General for the extension of the UNMIT mandate for a further period of 12 months, with the same composition and current authorized level of personnel while continuing with the gradual decrease of police personnel.

The progress made so far gives us hope and confidence that we are moving towards making UNMIT a real success story. We appreciate the efforts by UNMIT, the international community and the bilateral partners in this regard.

Last but not least, I would like to express my delegation's sincere appreciation to Special Representative of the Secretary-General Haq and her team for their dedication and hard work in supporting the Government and people of Timor-Leste.

Mr. Dunn (United States of America): I thank Prime Minister Gusmão and Ambassador Haq for their briefings on Timor-Leste and the United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste (UNMIT). We thank Special Representative of the Secretary-General Haq for her dedicated leadership and commitment to solidifying peace in Timor-Leste.

The United Nations and the international community as a whole played a critical role in the independence of Timor-Leste, as described with much eloquence by Prime Minister Gusmão. Sustained international support will be crucial to ensuring a peaceful and prosperous future for this young country.

Today, I would like to make five brief points that touch on both the progress that Timor-Leste has made and on the challenges that lie ahead.

First, the United States is encouraged that the security situation in the country remains stable, to the degree that a further reduction in the force size of the United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste (UNMIT) is planned for June 2011. We are encouraged by the international community's continued commitment to the electoral process in Timor-Leste. In that regard, we are eager to learn the results of the needs assessment mission, which will determine the scope and kind of election support needed. The success of the electoral process will indicate a further consolidation of peace and security throughout the country and signal continued progress toward a peaceful and prosperous future.

Second, the transfer of primary policing responsibilities from UNMIT to the Timorese national police will be critical to further cementing stability in the country. Efforts to strengthen institutions and build local capacity are essential to the success of the peacekeeping mission. We commend UNMIT, the Policia Nacional de Timor-Leste and bilateral donors for their hard work in this area. We strongly support the efforts of UNMIT to adapt the composition of its personnel to address the changing nature of UNMIT policing in Timor-Leste. UNMIT must ensure that the Mission has the appropriate specialized skills it needs to be successful. That includes ensuring that all 19 additional civilian expert posts within UNMIT's police component are filled as expeditiously as possible.

We are concerned that the Government of Timor-Leste certified 199 police officers despite pending criminal and disciplinary charges. Of those, 52 face serious disciplinary and criminal charges. We strongly urge the Government to pursue justice expeditiously. The accountability of the police force and the discipline process under which it operates are critical for the integrity of the Timorese national police.

Third, the development of competent and professional security institutions, both police and military, is critical to the long-term success of Timor-Leste. We commend the progress that has been made in constructing the overarching legislative and policy framework in the security sector. We urge the Government to finalize its national security policy and to work to implement an understanding of the resulting roles and responsibilities throughout the security institutions, specifically within the military and police.

The United States is committed to strengthening the Timorese security sector. We have recently increased our bilateral support in this area — for example, through a programme to advance community policing.

Fourth, we are encouraged by the concluding conference of the national consensus dialogue on truth, justice and reconciliation. The United States strongly supports those and additional efforts to further the national reconciliation process under clear and predictable legal procedures. Addressing growing concerns about impunity and establishing public trust in the justice sector are important for a stable path forward.

Finally, socio-economic development and democratic institutions are critical to the long-term stability and security of Timor-Leste. Sustained engagement of the international community is essential, as is continued engagement with bilateral partners. The United States is committed to assisting Timor-Leste to achieve its long-term goals. We are investing in programmes to promote good governance, improve health and spur economic growth.

As we continue to partner with Timor-Leste, we are pleased to note the continued planning undertaken by the Government and UNMIT for an eventual UNMIT departure and a transition to a post-UNMIT presence. The United States welcomes the High-Level Committee on Transition and the establishment of seven working groups. Those bodies are critical in identifying and addressing the challenges on the road ahead.

We encourage UNMIT and the Government of Timor-Leste to create a gradual and methodical transition plan. Such planning should include handing over or discontinuing certain United Nations functions, beginning this year, and closing United Nations offices in a staged fashion well in advance of UNMIT's departure. We further encourage UNMIT and the Government of Timor-Leste to identify the role the United Nations will play after UNMIT's departure and to work closely with bilateral missions throughout the planning and transition process. We believe that elections should not in themselves be an exit strategy. UNMIT's transition should be determined by events on the ground.

In closing, I would like to thank the peacekeepers of UNMIT, as well as their Timorese partners on the ground, and international supporters for the continued dedication to peace and security in Timor-Leste. Timorese have made great strides towards peace and stability and will continue to do so with the presence and commitment of strong international partners.

Mr. Dolgov (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We too would like to thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Ms. Ameerah Haq, for presenting the report on the work of the United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste (UNMIT) (S/2011/32). We welcome the Prime Minister of the country, Mr. Xanana Gusmão, and we listened attentively to his assessments.

I can say straight away that Russia is satisfied with the stabilization of the military and political situation in Timor-Leste and with the progress made in key areas of its development. That is undoubtedly due to the country's leadership and to the United Nations Mission. The political forces in Timor-Leste have been demonstrating a responsible approach and a commitment to the process of national dialogue and reconciliation based on democratic principles. That is especially important in the context of the general elections planned for 2012.

The stabilization of the situation has created the necessary preconditions for tackling long-term challenges. The Government has managed to achieve economic growth, a decrease in the poverty level and improvements in human development indicators. We welcome the progress in handing over responsibilities for law enforcement from United Nations peacekeepers to the Timor-Leste police. We trust that process will be concluded shortly. We agree with the Secretary-General's proposal to refocus the efforts of the United Nations Mission on providing assistance to the national police and strengthening its potential. Given that, while the State authorities are currently being established, the socio-economic problems remain acute, the progress that has been made requires further and stronger assistance from the international community. In that regard we support the recommendation of the Secretary-General to extend the mandate of the Mission for a year.

We approve the plan to decrease the police component of the Mission as the situation in the country improves, and in accordance with the wishes of the Government. The Mission should be prepared to provide assistance in conducting the elections. We have taken note of the information on the start of discussions with the leadership of Timor-Leste on the parameters of future work for the United Nations Mission and the modalities for the United Nations presence.

In conclusion, I would like to express our gratitude to the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and to all the staff of the Mission, which include Russian civilian police officers, for their professional work.

Mr. Barbalić (Bosnia and Herzegovina): At the outset, we wish to welcome the presence of Prime Minister Gusmão and thank him for his valuable contribution to this debate. Also, we wish to thank the Special Representative, Ms. Haq, for her briefing today and for her commitment in fulfilling the mandate.

Bosnia and Herzegovina would like to commend the Timorese people, Government and political parties for their cooperation and responsibility, which largely contributed to the overall progress achieved in all areas during the reporting period. We also welcome the important role that the United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste (UNMIT) continues to play in support of the efforts of Timor-Leste to advance peace, stability and development. With this in mind, Bosnia and Herzegovina supports UNMIT's mandate extension for another 12 months.

We are pleased to learn that significant progress has been made in many important areas, particularly in strengthening the rule of law and the development of democratic institutions.

We would like to recall that the Council had the opportunity to learn about the institution-building experience of Timor-Leste during its open debate on post-conflict peacebuilding: institution-building, organized by Bosnia and Herzegovina last month (see S/PV.6472 and Resumption 1).

Strengthening security sector reform is crucial for sustainable peace and security in Timor-Leste. We welcome the resumption by the Policia Nacional de Timor-Leste (PNTL) of primary responsibilities for police operations in two additional districts in September 2010. We strongly encourage the early finalization of this process in all districts and units. To that end, the joint activities of UNMIT and the PNTL in further institutional capacity-building — including improving administrative skills, investigating gender-based violence, countering human trafficking and community policing — are of particular importance. They represent a part of the PNTL strategic development plan for 2011-2012 that should result in its full resumption of primary policing activities.

We firmly believe that only truth and justice can lead Timor-Leste towards full reconciliation and prosperity. We therefore welcome the outcome of the concluding conference of the national consensus dialogue on truth, justice and reconciliation, which will certainly further facilitate continued dialogue within Timorese society.

Regarding the general elections to be held in 2012, we welcome the expected approval of proposed amendments to the laws on presidential and parliamentary elections and the electoral management bodies. That will consolidate institutional capacities to conduct the upcoming elections with limited international support. In that context, we also support the role envisaged for the United Nations in providing technical and logistical support as requested. The successful organization and conduct of the 2012 elections will be a major test of democratic progress in Timor-Leste.

As the Secretary-General stated in his report (S/2011/32), the economy of Timor-Leste has recovered remarkably since the 2006 crisis. However, additional efforts are needed to sustain the envisaged growth by promoting rural development and infrastructure development and the role of the private sector, which should provide more employment opportunities, especially for young people.

Finally, we would like to reiterate our full support for the efforts of the people and Government of Timor-Leste to achieve sustainable peace, stability and prosperity in their community.

Mr. Briens (France) (*spoke in French*): I wish to thank Ms. Haq, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, for her briefing. I also welcome the presence here of the Prime Minister of Timor-Leste, Mr. Gusmão. Ms. Haq underscored that the situation in Timor remains calm and continues to develop in the right direction.

I would like to congratulate Prime Minister Gusmão and, through him, the authorities and the parliamentary opposition in his country, as well as its civil society, all of whom confirm the political maturity and solidity of their young institutions. The economic and social progress we have seen, particularly in poverty reduction, is the consequence of this new stability, to the benefit of the Timorese people. What we see in Timor today is a success story for the United Nations and its ability to accompany a country on the road to peace and stability.

However, the country's recent history should not encourage us to relax our attention or our efforts. From that viewpoint, we are convinced that peace and reconciliation will be achieved in Timor only if its authorities show determination to fight impunity. It is therefore essential that the Timorese State be able to vouch, beyond the shadow of a doubt, for the integrity of its police officers at the moment when they are about to resume all their responsibilities. We expect, therefore, that Timorese justice will continue to prosecute those guilty of committing serious crimes during the events of 2006. Like the Special Representative, we note with concern the decision to certify 199 police officers despite the criminal and disciplinary procedures that are under way, some of them very serious.

We hope that we will soon see the prompt completion of the parliamentary deliberations on the laws on reparations, as well as on the follow-on institution to the Commission for Reception, Truth and Reconciliation and the Commission of Truth and Friendship.

We trust the Special Representative to lead the United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste (UNMIT) throughout the period that will encompass the full transfer of powers to the Timorese police, the 2012 elections and the withdrawal of the Mission. The goals, I think, are clear. First, it must ensure that the numbers and qualifications of UNMIT staff correspond to the Mission's new tasks and to the situation on the ground. Secondly, the Mission must contribute to the success of the 2012 elections, the responsibility for which will belong to the Timorese themselves. Thirdly, UNMIT must prepare for the Mission's withdrawal after those elections, under the best conditions possible.

We hope that the next report of the Secretary-General and the renewal of the Mission's mandate in February 2012 will afford the opportunity to define — together, of course, with the authorities of Timor-Leste — the kind of presence that the United Nations will maintain there after UNMIT leaves. Its departure will be proof not of lack of interest on the part of the international community, but of the trust we have in this country's capacity to take charge of its destiny.

Mr. Sangqu (South Africa): South Africa thanks the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Ms. Ameerah Haq, for her briefing to the Council today. We also appreciate the presence in this debate of His Excellency Prime Minister Xanana Gusmão of the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste and thank him for his statement. We also thank the Secretary-General for his report (S/2011/32).

In just over a decade since independence, Timor-Leste has made significant progress towards long-term stability, peace and development. The Government and people of the country had to start afresh with the creation of peace and stability after decades of struggling for independence. The relative peace in Timor-Leste has facilitated an enabling environment for development goals and the establishment of State- and institution-building. Those efforts should be recognized. The international community, particularly the United Nations, has played a crucial role in partnering with the Timorese in addressing their challenges. The Government of Timor-Leste should be commended for its continuation of national dialogue and unity, consolidation and building of sustainable peace, and respect for constitutional principles and the democratic rule of law.

Those processes will benefit significantly from the Government's continued efforts to foster dialogue and reconciliation through the hosting of the national consensus conference involving a spectrum of national actors, both from the Government and from civil society, and through the seminars organized by the Anti-Corruption Commission. These are indispensable and important indications of serious efforts by the Government of Timor-Leste to address the difficult issues of justice, corruption and reconciliation. Those efforts on the Government's part bode well for the consolidation of democracy and are indicative of the people's aspirations for a prosperous future.

South Africa firmly believes that the stable security situation in Timor-Leste has laid a solid foundation for its economic development. Its continued peace and stability has translated into remarkable progress, and the 2010 *Human Development Report* ranked Timor-Leste 120th of 169 countries, signalling a remarkable improvement since 2005. My delegation also noted with great satisfaction that Timor-Leste is now ranked among the 20 fastest-growing economies in the world.

We further acknowledge the important progress achieved by the Timor-Leste national police force in resuming its primary policing responsibilities. The Government of Timor-Leste continues to make progress in developing an overarching legislative and policy framework for the security sector, and we also appreciate the progress made in meeting the objectives of the medium-term strategy in the areas of the rule of law, justice and human rights.

South Africa commends the Government of Timor-Leste for introducing social welfare packages for the aged and the vulnerable and the legislation passed to establish social pensions for combatants, as well as labour-intensive infrastructure projects at the community level to inject income into poorer households.

Despite the commendable progress achieved, challenges remain, and the Government of Timor-Leste will continue to rely on the support of the international community. One important challenge is the need for continued training and capacity-building for the Policia Nacional de Timor-Leste (PNTL) in the five areas defined by the national authorities: legislation, training, administration, discipline and operations.

A further challenge relates to the issue of unemployment, especially among young people, which, as the Secretary-General's report indicates, has "potential for disillusionment and social unrest". In that regard, my delegation supports the Secretary-General's observation that "the challenge now is to achieve inclusive and sustainable growth by promoting rural development, the private sector and employment generation, especially for youth" (*S/2011/32), para. 65*). Continued efforts to address urban-rural disparities and to support vulnerable groups must also be prioritized.

In its efforts to further deepen democracy and stability, Timor-Leste is preparing to hold its national elections in 2012. My delegation welcomes the ongoing work of UNMIT and the United Nations Development Programme to build the capacity of the national institutions to run and administer these elections and to provide them with logistical and technical support. As we support State-building and institution-building in Timor-Leste, we are reminded that these efforts will be sustainable only if grounded on the principle of national ownership and when security and developmental needs are carefully calibrated.

With regard to the future of UNMIT's mandate, my delegation supports the extension of the mandate by 12 months. We encourage careful calibration of a drawdown after the 2012 elections, taking into consideration the conditions on the ground and that the future mandate reflects a priority of the national Government, in particular focusing on its consolidation of the peacebuilding efforts.

Mr. Onemola (Nigeria): Allow me to welcome His Excellency Mr. Xanana Gusmão, Prime Minister of Timor-Leste, to the Security Council and to thank him for his insightful and comprehensive statement. I would also like to thank Ms. Ameerah Haq, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Timor-Leste, for her lucid briefing today in the context of the Secretary-General's report (S/2011/32). We appreciate her contributions and dedicated service as Head of the United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste (UNMIT).

I will limit my remarks to three important issues, namely, the political and security situation in Timor-Leste, its economic and development agenda and its judicial and correctional system.

The Nigerian delegation welcomes the climate of calm and stability that continues to characterize the overall political and security situation in Timor-Leste, especially since 2008. The prevailing condition undoubtedly manifests the commitment of the Timorese leadership and stakeholders to sustain peace through national dialogue and political inclusiveness. Indeed, the relative calm has also facilitated focused implementation of the Government's national development plan. In that context we welcome the consultations held in Dili from 27 to 29 December 2010 on the Government's proposed development plans for 2011, as a firm determination by the Government to promote internal peace and security.

The resumption of primary policing responsibilities by the Policia nacional de Timor-Leste (PNTL) is also critical to bolster the country's peace and stability. We therefore welcome the recent progress recorded in the resumption of primary policing responsibilities by the PNTL in two additional districts and three more units. We fully support the district-by-district process of handing responsibility back to the Timorese police. We expect, however, that the process will be completed within the given timeline, thus paving the way for the PNTL to assume full command and control responsibility for all police operations in Timor-Leste.

We want to emphasize that an effective disciplinary mechanism is vital for the creation of a strong, professional and independent PNTL. In that regard, the recent decision of the Government to certify 52 PNTL officers who are facing various disciplinary and criminal charges is of serious concern. The core challenge facing the Government and the country's judicial authorities is how to safeguard the integrity of the PNTL and ensure that its internal discipline systems are effective.

The constructive interaction between the various political parties and major stakeholders in guaranteeing peace, harmony and continuity in governance is commended. In particular, we note the Government's initiative on roads to peace and national unity, which has helped to foster dialogue and reconciliation among the parties.

The prospects for long-term peace, political stability and economic recovery and growth are huge incentives for the parties to approach the 2012 elections with renewed vigour and compromise. We therefore welcome the commencement of the joint transition planning mechanism, especially the fourth meeting of the High-Level Committee on Transition.

The recent measures taken by Government to strengthen the capacity and effectiveness of the justice and correctional sectors are commendable. Those measures have clearly enhanced access to justice, reduced pending criminal prosecution cases and improved prison infrastructure. Nonetheless, the challenges of staffing and insufficient budgets are daunting. To underpin the notable progress already achieved in these sectors, the Government should emphasize combating impunity. Steps should also be taken to generate public confidence in the judicial system and ensure respect for the independence of the judiciary.

Regarding economic development, Timor-Leste's social and economic revival is rapidly gaining traction, with improved security and greater confidence in the country's leaders. We therefore welcome the reduction in poverty and improvements in human development indicators and the prudent use of resources by the Government, including the huge investment in infrastructure.

To fully transform the economy, the Government should give priority to rural development and youth employment. There is also an overarching need for the Government to communicate its goals and programmes more clearly to the population. If properly harnessed, investments in the three economic pillars identified by the Government — agriculture, natural resources and tourism — will generate economic growth and accelerate the pace of development in the country.

Finally, we wish to express our appreciation to UNMIT and the United Nations country team for the important roles they have played in promoting peace, stability and development in Timor-Leste. We call on donors and development partners to provide long-term, predictable support that will strengthen the Government as it faces the onerous challenges of achieving lasting peace and security in the country. We commend the United Nations capacity-building and technical assistance support for Timor-Leste, rendered through UNMIT and the United Nations Development

Programme. The establishment of the National Defence Institute is a laudable demonstration of this commitment.

Nigeria shares the Secretary-General's view that UNMIT's police presence will be vital to support the PNTL in capacity-building, skill enhancement and specific advisory functions in all districts and units of Timor-Leste throughout 2012. UNMIT police will also provide operational support to the PNTL in the event of extreme circumstances, if so required and requested, during the period of elections in 2012. Given the critical roles to be played by UNMIT, Nigeria supports the extension of its mandate for another year.

Mr. Parham (United Kingdom): I wish to express our thanks to Prime Minister Gusmão and to the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Ameerah Haq, for their briefings today and to all the personnel of the United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste (UNMIT) for their dedication to assisting the people of Timor-Leste.

The next two years will determine the prospects for a stable and peaceful future for Timor-Leste and its people. The elections in mid-2012 remain the most significant milestone ahead. As Timor-Leste works towards those elections, we are pleased that the security situation continues calm and that there has been clear and steady improvement since 2006.

The men and women of UNMIT deserve credit for their role in ensuring the stabilization of Timor-Leste. Their work is now bearing fruit as the Government increasingly assumes responsibility for domestic security.

We are particularly encouraged by the imminent handover of all policing districts to the national police forces — the PNTL — and the fact that this transition is being accomplished without any increase in crime or disorder. The successful handover to the PNTL marks a step towards the end of the United Nations peacekeeping role. We do not envisage that the Security Council will need to extend UNMIT's peacekeeping mandate beyond February 2013.

As we prepare for UNMIT's departure in two years' time, it is right that the United Nations police (UNPOL) should begin its drawdown now. We note the small drawdown of UNPOL personnel recently recommended by the Secretary-General. We expect to see this rapidly accelerated after the election in 2012. The drawdown should be regarded as a display of trust in the PNTL's ability to re-establish itself as the primary provider of security in Timor-Leste. The Government of Timor-Leste can play an important role by ensuring that its police are sufficiently equipped with important enablers such as generators, communications facilities and office equipment to enable the PNTL to reach its full potential.

The Government of Timor-Leste should also ensure — as some of my colleagues have highlighted — that the integrity of the PNTL is not compromised. The words of Prime Minister Gusmão this morning on this subject were encouraging. But we are concerned at the news that 52 serving PNTL officers who face serious criminal charges have been certified. We call on the Government of Timor-Leste to give priority to resolving this unsatisfactory situation.

The Government should also continue to take a firm stance against impunity and to bring perpetrators of war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide to justice. It is important that work on legislation providing for follow-up to the Commission for Reception, Truth and Reconciliation make real progress alongside work on reparations for victims of past abuses.

It is imperative that the United Nations now prioritize planning for its post-2012 presence. UNMIT must plan a coherent, realistic and durable exit strategy, enabling civilian peacebuilding actors to take the lead in helping shape Timor-Leste's future. We look forward to receiving a detailed update on this planning in the Secretary-General's report later this year.

At the same time, the wider United Nations family must work towards addressing the longer-term needs of the county, in close collaboration with the Government of Timor-Leste. We stress the importance of the High-Level Committee on Transition in this regard. United Nations involvement in Timor-Leste has the potential to be a beacon of success, modelling how peacekeeping operations can be drawn down as civilian peacebuilders continue their vital work. The United Kingdom encourages the United Nations to seize this opportunity.

Mr. Moraes Cabral (Portugal) (*spoke in Portuguese; English text provided by the delegation*): Allow me to welcome the presence here today of His Excellency Kay Rala Xanana Gusmão, Prime Minister of Timor-Leste. Xanana Gusmão has long represented the struggle of Timor-Leste for self-determination and independence. He is a man who has shown unrelenting courage and determination in face of the most tremendous odds, who has led his young country, first as President of the Republic and today as Prime Minister. In welcoming Prime Minister Xanana Gusmão, I also welcome the leader of a sister nation, a member of the Community of Portuguese-speaking Countries (CPLP), a Community united by indelible links. It is indeed symbolic that today, both Timor-Leste and Portugal are sitting at this table in a meeting chaired by Brazil. Welcome, Prime Minister — your words inspire our trust in the future of Timor-Leste.

(*spoke in English*)

I also wish to thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for her very comprehensive briefing and to assure her once again of Portugal's full support for the work of the United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste (UNMIT).

Today, Timor-Leste is at a very special juncture. In roughly one year's time, ten years after her independence, very important elections will be held, thus respecting once again the democratic path that the Timorese people have charted for themselves.

Next year, the Security Council, acting on the advice of the authorities of Timor-Leste and the High-Level Committee on Transition, will be working on ways in which the United Nations will continue to contribute to the consolidation of democratic institutions, of the rule of law and of economic and social development in the country upon the conclusion of UNMIT's mandate. But we will have the opportunity to discuss those issues at the appropriate time; today, I wish to underline the encouraging achievements that took place in 2010 in several areas, despite the enduring problems still facing the country.

Parallel to the further development of democratic institutions, democratic culture and practices are consolidating their imprint in Timorese society. Political dialogue on matters of national concerns has been reinforced, and we are encouraged by the active involvement of the Timorese leadership, including the opposition, in that process. We believe that strengthening the forums for open and democratic discussions of national issues is the best way to find solutions for them and to reinforce national cohesion in facing difficult challenges.

In the economic field, growth has been fast, and the recently approved budget may represent a useful tool for the diversification of the economy, the development of much-needed infrastructure and the creation of jobs, while ensuring a better distribution of wealth and increasing opportunities, especially for young people.

The judicial system has also improved its capacities, including in rural areas, and has strengthened its independence. Training of judicial officials and prison officers has continued. The protection of human rights, including in terms of gender issues, is progressing. As a leading cooperation partner in the justice sector, Portugal recognizes the importance of a coordinated approach to justice system reform, in order to increase Timorese ownership in strengthening national institutions.

I wish to commend UNMIT for the very important contribution it has made to the progress I have outlined. Timor-Leste is indeed an example of a United Nations contribution to peacebuilding that has succeeded well, and we are confident that the current peaceful situation will endure during and beyond 2012.

Notwithstanding these very important positive developments, Timor-Leste is still confronted with serious challenges. There is still much to be done to strengthen the State institutions in order for them to fully discharge their responsibilities. Likewise, accomplishing security sector reform, developing the capacities of the civil society, ensuring full respect for the rule of law and further promoting human rights are still priority tasks on the path towards a consolidated and stable democracy in Timor-Leste.

Like others, we believe that long-term stability and security will depend on the capacity of Timorese security institutions to function in an effective, responsible and accountable way, fully respecting the rule of law and benefiting from public trust and support. A clear articulation of strategies within and across State institutions is indispensable on these issues.

One issue that has been a matter of concern for members of the Council is the certification of officers of the Policia Nacional de Timor-Leste (PNTL) facing serious criminal and disciplinary charges. We took note of the Prime Minister's encouraging comments on the matter, and we trust that due and speedy process will be observed, leading to the reinforcement of the credibility, professionalism, impartiality and effectiveness of the PNTL. Portugal encourages the Government of Timor-Leste to continue working closely with UNMIT on all issues concerning the PNTL, specifically the five priority areas highlighted by the Special Representative and with the continued support of the United Nations police.

The people of Timor-Leste have repeatedly shown their resolve to build a peaceful, democratic and stable society. These goals require the continued support of the international community, and it is important that the Timorese rest assured that they are not and will not be alone in pursuing these objectives. UNMIT continues to play a crucial role in this context, and we fully support the extension of its mandate for an additional period of 12 months. UNMIT's role before, during and after next year's elections will be fundamental to help the Timorese authorities ensure a stable and secure environment for the elections and their outcome.

Portugal remains fully committed to supporting Timor-Leste in its efforts to consolidate democracy and development, both bilaterally and as a member of the European Union and the CPLP. Our cooperation with Timor-Leste covers a very wide spectrum of areas, including governance, public administration, justice, education and security sector reform, and fully supports all areas under the responsibility of UNMIT. We are particularly happy that, in the near future, we will be welcoming Timorese officers in the framework of Portuguese contingents in peacekeeping operations. That highlights the degree of maturity and professionalism reached by the Falintil-Forças Armadas de Defesa de Timor-Leste (F-FDTL).

We are convinced that Timor-Leste will succeed in its endeavours, but in order for the country to reach its objective, the international community must carry on providing the necessary political support and appropriate resources, thereby living up to its responsibilities and commitments to democracy and stability in Timor-Leste.

Mr. Moungara Moussotsi (Gabon) (*spoke in French*): I too would like to thank the Ms. Ameerah Haq, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Timor-Leste, for her detailed presentation on the report of the Secretary-General (S/2011/32) on the activities of the United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste (UNMIT). I would like to take this opportunity to recognize His Excellency Mr. Kay Rala Xanana Gusmão, Prime Minister and Minister of Defence of Timor-Leste, and thank him for his important statement.

In my statement, I will focus mainly on the progress made in the construction process in Timor-Leste, the remaining challenges and the outlook for the future.

With regard to progress, the report under consideration takes stock of, among other things, the advances made in the security and justice sectors. There have been encouraging developments in the economic sector. With regard to security, my delegation is pleased that the overall situation remained calm and that in many areas and districts the Timorese State, in particular the national police, is reassuming its prerogatives and its State functions of maintaining public order. We further note the continuing coordination and cooperation between the international security forces and Timorese forces.

Indeed, the civilian police component of UNMIT has continued its efforts to strengthen the capacity of the Timorese police and to foster institutional development through logistical support, targeted training, administrative skills development, ongoing inquiries into cases of sexual violence, combating human trafficking and through community policing. We can only welcome this.

We further commend UNMIT for its efforts to train Timorese national civilian police officers so as to enable them to serve in United Nations peacekeeping missions. Gabon has always advocated building the capacity of Member States for peacekeeping.

We remain convinced that the development plan for the police for 2010-2012, intended to strengthen the operational capacity of the national police, provides a unique framework for cooperation between the police and UNMIT.

With regard to the justice system, my delegation welcomes the support provided by UNMIT, the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Population Fund and the United Nations Development Fund for Women to strengthen the Timorese judicial apparatus, in particular through staff training programmes and the development of the legislative framework. They are also providing assistance in conducting some of the more complex inquiries, such as those involving the serious crimes committed in 1999. The increased number of cases prepared for judgment and the extension of justice administration to rural areas are also satisfying developments.

Regarding the economic sector, we welcome the progress made in achieving the 2010 national priorities targets in the framework of the international compact for Timor-Leste. In spite of the serious food crisis, which unfortunately does not exclude any developing country, we should be pleased that the State has provided food assistance to the most vulnerable persons. We also welcome the progress made towards the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, particularly in terms of the infant mortality rate, which decreased from 83 to 64 deaths per 1,000 live births.

My delegation shares the Secretary-General's satisfaction with the remarkable recovery of the economy of Timor-Leste, which posted a growth rate of close to 10 per cent, with a reduction in poverty and an improvement in human development indicators. We hope that the revenues generated by hydrocarbons, which enabled the progress, will continue to benefit from good governance, in order to stay the course of growth and to attain sustainable and comprehensive development in the country.

Regarding the challenges, we must continue to fight impunity and corruption, which are sources of potential conflict. Responsibly addressing those issues will undeniably help not only to build public trust in institutions but also to preserve the gains made in national reconciliation, in reinforcing the rule of law and, by extension, stability and durable peace in Timor-Leste. Similarly, the presidential and parliamentary elections to be held in 2012 will test the entire peace process in Timor-Leste.

My delegation believes that the outlook for peace and development in Timor-Leste remains reassuring. The Government and its various bilateral and multilateral partners seem to be solidly committed to establishing peace and building the economy. The country's assets in terms of development are not insignificant, either. We must therefore continue to encourage the Timorese people to derive maximum benefit from the support of the international community and from the revenue generated by the oil sector to establish national unity and build a prosperous nation.

To contribute to the achievement of those objectives, my delegation supports the Secretary-General's recommendation to extend the mandate of UNMIT for an additional 12 months.

My country once again congratulates the Government and the people of Timor-Leste for their laudable efforts for peace and stability in their country. I reiterate my delegation's firm support for the remarkable work of UNMIT. I commend the leadership of Ms. Ameerah Haq and the professionalism that she and her staff have shown on the ground. They can count on my delegation's ongoing support.

Mr. Li Baodong (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): I wish to thank Ms. Ameerah Haq, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Timor-Leste, for her briefing. I also welcome the Prime Minister of Timor-Leste and his participation in today's meeting. I have listened carefully to his statement.

We take pleasure in seeing that the overall situation in Timor-Leste remains stable. The State capacity has gradually strengthened. There are significant opportunities for economic and social development. The national police of Timor-Leste are playing an increasingly important role in maintaining public order. The Government and people of Timor-Leste have made inspiring progress in the construction of their country. I also commend the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and the United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste (UNMIT) for their efforts to that end.

At the same time, however, Timor-Leste still faces many challenges on the road to consolidating peace, maintaining peace and stability and achieving sustainable development. China is of the view that the international community should now focus its support to Timor-Leste in the following three areas.

First, we encourage all parties in Timor-Leste to base their actions on the country's long-term interest, to maintain unity and settle their differences through political dialogue. We commend President Ramos-Horta for continuing to promote the national consensus dialogue. We hope that the presidential and parliamentary elections to be held next year will proceed smoothly.

Secondly, China welcomes the strategic development plan proposed by the Government of Timor-Leste. Poverty, lack of economic development, insufficient institutional capacity, youth unemployment and the shortage of human resources are the major factors affecting peacebuilding and social stability in Timor-Leste. We support the Government in its efforts to continue to strengthen institutional capacity-building, focus its energy on development, expand its input in infrastructure, education and health and further improve the lives of its people.

Thirdly, ultimately achieving lasting security and stability in Timor-Leste depends on the strength of the people and Government of Timor-Leste. China supports Timor-Leste in strengthening capacity-building in the police and judicial sectors, with the assistance of the United Nations and relevant countries, and in taking over full responsibility for the maintenance of public order at an early date.

We support the extension of UNMIT for one year on the basis of the current mandate. We have taken note of the plan for the future restructuring and downsizing of UNMIT mentioned in the Secretary-General's report (S/2011/32). We support the full transfer of responsibilities to the Government of Timor-Leste when conditions are right. Meanwhile, the plan to downsize should fully take into account next year's elections and, under the prerequisite of maintaining security and stability, ensure a smooth transition. The international community should continue to provide further assistance to Timor-Leste in order to consolidate peace and promote development.

Once UNMIT's mandate expires, on the basis of respect for the will of the people and Government of Timor-Leste, the United Nations can remain in Timor-Leste as a friendly partner. China is ready to continue to provide as much support and assistance to Timor-Leste as we can.

Ms. Duarte-Rodriguez (Colombia) (*spoke in Spanish*): Colombia would like to thank Prime Minister of Timor-Leste Xanana Gusmão for his important contribution to our debate today. We would also like to commend the work of Special Representative of the Secretary-General Ameerah Haq and Mr. Finn Reske-Nielsen, Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Governance Support, Development and Humanitarian Coordination, as well as that of the Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Security Sector Support and Rule of Law.

As a non-permanent member of the Council in September 2002, Colombia participated in the discussions that led to the establishment of this new State and its entry into the United Nations. My delegation therefore notes with particular satisfaction the ongoing developments towards quickly consolidating peace, development and stability in Timor-Leste. We agree on the importance of continuing efforts to promote national unity and dialogue through cooperation with the various political, national and regional forces, including civil society, the Catholic Church, the United Nations and other stakeholders in Timor-Leste.

We are pleased to see that bilateral relations with Indonesia remain strong. The Bali meeting in December is proof of that, in particular the commitment shown by Indonesia to help Timor-Leste in its plan to become a member of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations.

We emphasize the outcomes of the concluding conference of the national consensus dialogue on truth, justice and reconciliation, in particular with regard to reparations for victims of human rights violations committed between 1974 and 1999, and to the serious crimes committed in 1999. As President Ramos-Horta has said, it is necessary to find a balance between punitive and restorative elements.

We would like to highlight the progress made in the area of security, in particular in those districts in which the national police have resumed their functions. In that regard, we share the concern of the Special Representative about the certification of the 52 officers accused of committing serious crimes. While that procedure was based on the review and recommendations of the new certification scheme established by the Government, we believe that a more thorough review to prevent impunity is necessary.

We view the fact that domestic violence has been defined as a public order offence under the criminal code as an important step forward in judicial reform. However, we are struck by the continued use of traditional mechanisms that are not consistent with international human rights. We call for the full implementation of existing standards. We encourage initiatives developed in that regard by the Secretary of State for the Promotion of Equality, with the support of the United Nations Population Fund and the United Nations Development Fund for Women.

The report of the Secretary-General (S/2011/32) refers to much progress with regard to economic and social development. We are pleased to learn that Timor-Leste is growing at a rate of 10 per cent and that it has reduced the poverty level and improved human development indicators. However, we are concerned about the difficulty young people face in finding employment.

We endorse the work of the High-Level Committee on Transition. In that regard, we highlight the beginning of the work of the joint technical working groups on democratic governance, the police and security sector, the rule of law, justice, human rights, economic development, mission support and logistics, training for national officials and the impact of the Mission's departure on the local economy. Throughout that process it is necessary to regularly consult and duly inform all stakeholders, political parties, civil society and donors.

Colombia expresses its satisfaction at the progress achieved in Timor-Leste with the coordinated support of the United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste (UNMIT), other agencies and programmes of the United Nations system, financial institutions and donors. We should continue such support work while making preparations for the transition and permanent transfer of all functions to the authorities of Timor-Leste.

Given the progress achieved in the stabilization of Timor-Leste, my delegation supports the extension of UNMIT's mandate for another year.

Ms. Ziade (Lebanon) (*spoke in Arabic*): I would like to thank the Prime Minister of Timor-Leste for his important statement. I also thank Ms. Ameerah Haq for her briefing and for her efforts as head of the United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste (UNMIT) aimed at promoting security and stability and helping the Government and people of Timor-Leste to build their national institutions.

My delegation welcomes the contents of report of the Secretary-General (S/2011/32) with regard to the security and stability that Timor-Leste is experiencing. We look forward with optimism to further steps to strengthen national unity, as well as to positive economic indicators that augur well for a better future for the people of Timor-Leste. That was underscored by the Prime Minister himself in his statement today.

Joint efforts between the authorities of Timor-Leste and UNMIT must be redoubled during the remaining period of the Mission's mandate, to the end of 2012, in order to complete all major tasks entrusted to it, in particular, security sector reform, strengthening the rule of law, achieving socio-economic development and reinforcing a culture of dialogue and democratic governance. In that regard, we would like to make the following observations.

First, concerning security sector reform, we welcome the fact that the National Police of Timor-Leste is taking responsibility for security in 10 of 13 districts. We would like to stress the need for the rehabilitation of the national police to be completed so that it can undertake its security responsibilities in the three remaining districts. That will pave the way for the Mission's smooth exit.

Secondly, with regard to reinforcing the rule of law, we pay tribute to the recent measures undertaken to fight corruption. We underscore the importance of reactivating the role of the judiciary, in particular with regard to accountability and preventing impunity, especially as concerns the crimes committed in 1999 and during the crisis of 2006 and since. This is considered as one of the basic principles necessary for ensuring permanent security.

As for economic and social development, we welcome the national development plan for the period 2011-2030, which the Government is preparing in line with the Millennium Development Goals. In that regard, we would like to highlight the importance of the development plan covering all sectors of Timorese society. This will contribute to political stability and security.

As for ensuring a culture of dialogue and democratic governance, we welcome the democratic path taken by the Government of Timor-Leste. We believe that the presidential and parliamentary elections scheduled to take place in 2012 are indicative of the return of stability after the events of 2006. In that regard, we reiterate the importance of joint cooperation between the Mission and the election authorities in Timor-Leste.

In conclusion, there is no doubt that UNMIT represents a success story for the international community. Together with all the United Nations agencies, it has helped to strengthen democratic practices and build State institutions. We call upon all parties to make maximal use of its experience during the remaining period. We support the recommendation of the Secretary-General to extend the mandate of UNMIT for another year.

Mr. Wittig (Germany): Let me thank the Brazilian presidency for convening today's meeting and for preparing the draft resolution currently under consideration.

It is a pleasure to welcome Prime Minister Xanana Gusmão to the Council today. We have listened to his intervention with great interest and commend him on his achievements. Germany will continue to support his country bilaterally in cooperation with our European Union partners, and not least as a member of the Council and within the United Nations community.

I also welcome Special Representative of the Secretary-General Ameerah Haq. I thank her for the briefing and would like to commend her able leadership of the Mission. Germany takes note with satisfaction of the fact that the overall situation in Timor-Leste remains stable. The United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste (UNMIT) certainly has made its contribution, and we would like to pay tribute to the work of the men and women who make up the Mission.

Before I offer some national remarks, let me underline that my Government aligns itself with the statement to be delivered by the representative of the European Union.

Germany supports the extension of the mandate of the Mission for another 12 months, as recommended by the Secretary-General. UNMIT, in cooperation with the Government of Timor-Leste, has achieved considerable results but, given the remaining institutional weaknesses and persisting fragilities, we are still facing considerable challenges. Germany therefore considers it imperative to continue to invest in Timorese capacities and institutions closely in line with national strategies, priorities and needs. National ownership is key to successful support.

The next 18 months will be crucial for building the foundations for lasting peace in Timor-Leste, with next year's elections being an important milestone. In that regard, Germany supports the Secretary-General's proposal to leave the Mission's composition and authorized levels of personnel unchanged while continuing the gradual decrease of police as conditions on the ground permit.

It is encouraging that the resumption of primary policing responsibilities by the national police has continued to make progress and that completion in all the districts and units is likely in the coming months. However, an adequate level of UNMIT police will be required, both to intensify the support to capacity-building and skills transfer and to lend operational support to the national police if needed. We believe that the proposed level allows for the necessary flexibility.

While we work towards the gradual transition to full Timorese control in all areas where currently international support is still required, it is clear that the United Nations has a longer-term commitment to Timor-Leste, including beyond UNMIT. If current trends can be sustained, the post-UNMIT period is approaching fast. Germany is therefore of the view that we need to continue to intensify discussions about the strategy and the modalities for the transition and the preparation for the future and scope of the United Nations on the ground post-UNMIT. We must make every effort to ensure that UNMIT support in areas where there is a continued need beyond the term of the Mission's final mandate is effectively transferred to State institutions, bilateral and multilateral partners, United Nations country team entities or civil society.

In the view of my Government, current progress will only be sustainable if the preconditions for the development of a vibrant civil society — functioning State structures and an adequate judicial framework — are in place. Germany agrees with the Secretary-General's call for continued efforts to be undertaken at all levels of society to combat impunity and to strengthen public confidence in the justice system. Public institutions themselves must be role models for the rule of law and for accountable action nation-wide. It is in that context that we share the concern about the so-called certification of police officers who face disciplinary and criminal charges. This very visible issue should be addressed thoroughly.

Inclusiveness is another decisive factor for achieving economic growth and sustainable development. The opportunity for women and young adults to contribute their share cannot be overestimated. We invite UNMIT to continue to focus on these groups of society and on implementing the women, peace and security agenda.

Let me conclude by thanking UNMIT and its partners once more for their commitment to creating the conditions for the Mission's future withdrawal and by encouraging our Timorese partners to continue the vigorous implementation of their ambitious national reform agenda. The Government's motto "Goodbye Conflict, Welcome Development" aptly sums up the aspirations we share.

The President: I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the representative of Brazil.

(*spoke in Portuguese; English text provided by the delegation*)

I would like to extend the warmest welcome to His Excellency Mr. Xanana Gusmão, Prime Minister of Timor-Leste. I would like to echo the words of the Permanent Representative of Portugal about the admirable role played by His Excellency Mr. Xanana Gusmão in the history of his young country and about the significance of this moment. Moreover, the presence of the Prime Minister among us today provides an opportunity for us to celebrate the significant progress achieved and to plan together the next steps to ensure a future of peace and prosperity for Timor-Leste.

(*spoke in English*)

I also wish to thank Special Representative of the Secretary-General Ameerah Haq for her briefing and commend her for her leadership and her work in Timor-Leste.

Although Brazil and Timor-Leste lie in different corners of the world, our two nations are very close. Not only do we share a common history and language, but we also face some of the typical challenges of developing countries. Those bonds have given rise to an intense bilateral cooperation over the past years.

Such cooperation encompasses a broad range of issues, including security sector reform, education and justice, to name just a few. Brazil has provided training for officers of the Policia Nacional de Timor-Leste (PNTL). We have sponsored initiatives on private sector development, professional training, elementary schoolteacher training and technical education in agriculture. Brazil has also been involved in the capacity-building activities and the training of Timorese judges, prosecutors and public attorneys.

This year Brazil has the special honour of being the lead country for Timor-Leste in the Security Council. I take this opportunity to thank Japan for its role as lead country for the past two years. Brazil wishes to congratulate the Timorese leadership and people for the significant progress they have achieved in the past few years. Important strides have been made in many areas, from sustained economic growth to enhanced capacity for delivering social services; from improved security to the consolidation of democracy; and from the promotion and protection of human rights to investment in infrastructure. Timor-Leste stands out as an example of post-conflict peacebuilding.

Let me focus on four issues that will be particularly important in the coming months, namely, the 2012 elections, security sector reform, socio-economic development and preparations for the transition period.

The parliamentary and presidential elections to be held during the first half of 2012 will constitute Timor-Leste's most important political event. We agree with the Secretary-General that a peaceful, transparent and credible electoral process will be an important milestone on the country's path to long-term stability and recovery. Brazil is confident that Timor-Leste will achieve those goals, thus consolidating its remarkable gains.

Progress has been particularly evident in the security sector. Ten districts have been handed over to the national police, while another two are ready to follow suit. Both the Government of Timor-Leste and the United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste (UNMIT) should strengthen their efforts to ensure that the PNTL is ready to resume primary policing responsibilities in Dili.

As Brazil has often noted, socio-economic development is a key component in the maintenance of peace and stability. Again, Timor-Leste has stood out in that respect, although challenges still remain. The international community should continue to assist whenever requested.

The last point I want to comment on is about the preparations for the transition period. UNMIT has made an outstanding contribution to the stability and development of Timor-Leste. It should now adapt to the new circumstances and assist the Government with its current challenges. These include socio-economic development, institution-building and security. Any decision on a gradual decrease in the number of

UNMIT police officers should reflect the realities on the ground rather than follow fixed or artificial deadlines. It should also be thoroughly discussed with the Timorese authorities.

Brazil is glad to celebrate Timor-Leste's achievements. Prime-Minister Xanana Gusmão and the Timorese people can be proud of them. It is now important for the country to build on that progress in order to follow a steady course towards peace consolidation and long-term development. The Security Council should continue to assist Timor-Leste in this endeavour.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

I give the floor to the representative of Japan.

Mr. Nishida (Japan): I would like to begin by extending a very warm welcome to His Excellency Prime Minister Kay Rala Xanana Gusmão of Timor-Leste, as well as to thank him for his statement. I would also like express our appreciation to Ms. Ameerah Haq for her briefing to the Council in her capacity as Special Representative of the Secretary-General.

Japan highly commends the positive developments in Timor-Leste in the past year. As the Secretary-General's report (S/2011/32) states, the situation remains calm, almost all internally displaced persons have returned to their home towns and, most significant, the Government has made notable progress in the area of security sector reform, by passing relevant laws well in advance of receiving the support of the United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste (UNMIT) for its comprehensive review.

We may say that Timor-Leste is at a critical juncture on the path to becoming a prosperous, responsible nation. In particular, the presidential and parliamentary elections scheduled for the first half of 2012 will be of great importance. We look forward to seeing transparent and democratic elections conducted proudly by the Timorese people. To achieve that goal, it is critically important to have not only adequate logistical and administrative capacity but also adequate security. In order to achieve the successful conduct of the elections, Japan stands ready to assist Timor-Leste, working with UNMIT in the area of electoral support, as required and requested.

We highly commend the national police's successful resumption of policing responsibility in most districts. We have seen the Policia Nacional de Timor-Leste (PNTL) and the United Nations police work together in the districts where policing responsibility has now been handed over. But what is more urgently needed, in accordance with the Special Representative's plan, is to build more substantial capacities within the PNTL in order for it to actively engage in the preventive activities usually described as community policing. Although such low-profile activities often get less attention from the public, they contribute to better security in the longer term. Japan therefore believes that the Government of Timor-Leste should increase its commitment in this area.

As for the issue of the certification of PNTL officers, I trust that the Government will find no reason to exempt the 52 officers who face serious disciplinary and criminal charges from further criminal and disciplinary proceedings. Japan acknowledges the strong willingness and commitment of the Government to expedite the resumption of the process to enable PNTL officers to gain as much experience as possible ahead of the critical elections in 2012 and the period beyond. However, the lack of capacity in the judicial sector should also be acknowledged as a source of concern. In that regard, I concur with the Special Representative, who has urged the Government and judicial authorities to take all measures necessary to ensure the national police's integrity. The international community stands ready to support this endeavour as well.

We recently saw that the Timorese budget has exceeded $1 billion and the country's population has surpassed 1 million people. Such rapid expansion gives this young country great potential, as well as posing socio-economic challenges. While we commend the Government's work, it is worrisome to note that many young people remain unemployed and that large numbers of youth are joining the labour market every year with limited opportunities for employment. Japan would therefore like to encourage the Government to put more emphasis on formulating policies for job creation and rural development.

Against this background, Japan strongly believes that UNMIT's presence and support are critical, especially in assisting the Government in the successful conduct of the important elections in 2012. From that point of view, Japan strongly supports the extension of UNMIT's mandate for another year, at the strength proposed in the Secretary-General's report. At the same time, Japan encourages not only the Government and UNMIT, but also the Security Council and all interested stakeholders, to engage actively in the discussions as to the type of international support and commitment that is most needed and most suitable for Timor-Leste. I affirm Japan's commitment to leading those efforts.

It was regrettable that the Security Council mission to Timor-Leste that Japan organized as lead country last October had to be postponed just before the planned departure. But we sincerely hope that the new members of the Council will undertake to reschedule the mission prior to the critical year of 2012.

I would like to conclude by reiterating Japan's continued commitment to strengthening the friendship between our countries and cooperating with the Timorese people to support their nation-building efforts.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of the Philippines.

Mr. Sorreta (Philippines): I would like to thank you, Madame President, and the members of the Security Council for allowing my delegation to speak on today's agenda item. We are also very grateful for the report (S/2011/32) of the Secretary-General on the situation in Timor-Leste. We are particularly appreciative of the presence of His Excellency the Prime Minister of Timor-Leste, whose words today reaffirmed his commitment and dedication to moving forward his young country in our part of the region and the world. My delegation also deeply appreciates the comprehensive and timely briefing of Ms. Ameerah Haq, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and head of the United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste (UNMIT).

Since the Council's last debate on UNMIT (see S/PV.6405), we have seen major improvements in the political and security situation in Timor-Leste. It is satisfying to stress that among the country's 13 districts, 10 now are in the hands of the Policia Nacional de Timor-Leste (PNTL), with the remaining three, including Dili, scheduled to be turned over in April. The vastly improved peace and order situation has allowed UNMIT to downsize the number of its police officers by 20 per cent. But at the same time, the reduction will test the ability of the PNTL to take over the role of United Nations police.

One immediate concern is to help the PNTL strengthen its criminal investigation and forensics capability. The major challenge over the long term will be to ensure balance between the PNTL's capacity to handle primary policing responsibilities and UNMIT's support to institution and capacity-building, including strengthening civilian oversight and management over the Timorese security forces.

As an active member of the core group on Timor-Leste, the Philippines welcomes these recent positive developments. The Philippine contingent in UNMIT and United Nations police, numbering 137 personnel, including 14 women, is now preparing to scale down its present force by around 30 per cent in the coming months, in accordance with UNMIT's overall drawdown plans and without sacrificing the contingent's effectiveness and viability.

The Philippines is also pleased to note that the overall crime rate in Timor-Leste has decreased. However, some concerns remain on the local security forces' ability to protect civilians. We are particularly concerned by reports of the growing incidence of violence against women. A solution must be found quickly to address this problem, lest it negate Timor-Leste's efforts to advance the cause of women at the regional and global levels.

The report of the Secretary-General underscored the great strides that Timor-Leste has made towards sustained peace and order, political and economic stability and the pursuit of justice and development. This is indeed a tribute to Timor-Leste's determination, notwithstanding the difficult challenges it continues to face as a young nation. The parliamentary elections in 2012 will be a crucial test for the people of Timor-Leste. Political stability is needed to deepen democracy and the rule of law in order to buttress the foundations of long-term peace and prosperity.

In that context, the Security Council will once again renew the mandate of UNMIT for another year — a decision that the Philippines strongly supports. As we experienced in 2006, premature United Nations disengagement can produce dire consequences.

The renewal of UNMIT's mandate must also be seen as a window of opportunity for the Government and people of Timor-Leste to show their readiness to take responsibility for their own peace and security. All agree that the transition to post-UNMIT must be well managed. But concrete steps are necessary to make it as smooth and seamless as possible. Coordination among UNMIT, the Government of Timor-Leste and other stakeholders must therefore be reinforced. In view of the inevitable expiration of UNMIT's mandate, all concerned partners must cooperate to come up with an exit strategy that is realistic, transparent and practical.

Like other States emerging from conflict, Timor-Leste faces hardship and adversity. But the Philippines believes that Timor-Leste, our good and close neighbour, is in a good position to hurdle the challenges ahead. I once again assure the Council and all of our partners in the United Nations, especially the core group on Timor-Leste, that the Philippines stands ready to do its part to contribute to the success of UNMIT and to help the people and Government of Timor-Leste in their quest for peace and prosperity.

The President: As I now give the floor to the representative of New Zealand, I wish to convey to him our deep sympathy and condolences for the loss of lives following the earthquake that struck his country.

Mr. McLay (New Zealand): Can I respond immediately by thanking you, Madame President, and Prime Minister Gusmão and others who have expressed their sympathy over the earthquake that occurred about 24 hours ago. Dawn is just now breaking in Christchurch and it will only be then that we can see the true extent of what is unquestionably a national tragedy. I thank you for your sympathy.

I want to thank Prime Minister Gusmão and Special Representative Haq for their statements, and the Secretary-General for his report (S/2011/32).

I want to acknowledge with deep respect the Prime Minister's lifetime of effort to provide Timorese with a path to a safer and more prosperous future, and in particular his leadership in nation-building over the past decade. It is an honour to have him join us today.

The Secretary-General's latest report paints a positive picture of progress over the past year, with the security situation more calm and stable and the country more prosperous than at any time since independence. The impressive commitment to democratic and constitutional norms across the political spectrum and the willingness to put long-term interests ahead of short-term gains bode well for next year's elections. Steady progress has been made in strengthening the justice and corrections sectors and the various institutions responsible for ensuring Government accountability and respect for human rights. Strong economic growth, together with targeted social programmes, has delivered progress in addressing key socio-economic challenges.

All of this is cause for optimism. But we cannot be complacent. The next 18 months will test whether the political and security climate can withstand the heat of competitive democratic elections. It will also test the readiness of core State institutions to sustain themselves with reduced international support.

When we last met in October (see S/PV.6405), there was broad recognition that Timor-Leste was entering a new phase. A period that required a large international presence to ensure security and support core State institutions is now giving way to one in which a confident and capable Government is increasingly charting its own course and defining the future form and scope of its international assistance.

After a decade focused on security and stability, attention has now turned to longer-term challenges of institutional development to achieve sustainable and inclusive growth. Carefully and effectively managing this must now be the Mission's overriding priority. The transition process must be nationally owned and led, with careful planning and sequencing of changes to the international presence in order to minimize risks of instability and disruption and with thoughtful judgments regarding the transfer of specific Mission functions and capacities to the Timorese Government.

New Zealand welcomes the early engagement between Government and Mission leadership, notably through the High-Level Committee on Transition and its working groups. We applaud the Mission's work to mitigate the economic impact of a future drawdown and to prepare local staff for post-UNMIT employment.

Nowhere will astute transition management be more important than in the security sector. We are pleased with progress made over the past year in transferring executive policing authority to the Policia Nacional de Timor-Leste (PNTL) and at the Secretary-General's advice that this process should be completed in the coming months, as it will be a significant milestone in the reconstitution of the Timorese security sector following the 2006 crisis.

Following handover, work will remain to ensure that PNTL administrative and operational capacities are sufficiently robust for it to operate unassisted. Little time remains before the PNTL will be asked to do just that. We therefore welcome the establishment of a process to agree priority measures to strengthen these capacities within the National Strategic Development Plan. All this requires close cooperation and coordination between the Mission and the PNTL leadership.

We also encourage early engagement with potential bilateral and multilateral partners. We also welcome assurances on early engagement with those partners, focused on expectations of future donor assistance to ensure they are realistic and clearly signalled. For its part, New Zealand is considering what bilateral assistance it can provide to the PNTL. This is likely to be focused in the area of community policing, building on the results and lessons learned from our recent pilot programme within UNMIT.

As UNMIT's policing undergoes fundamental change, so too must its size and composition. We support the Secretary-General's proposal to reduce the number of United Nations police, and are open to further gradual reductions if consistent with the wishes of the Government and realities on the ground. This drawdown must be conducive to maintaining stability in the lead-up to the 2012 elections and beyond, while providing the PNTL the space to operate with greater responsibility and autonomy.

The Mission must also be adequately equipped with the skills necessary to carry out the complex specialized tasks that now form its primary focus. Civilian and non-civilian deployments should be configured to effectively strengthen the human and organizational capacities of State institutions. We urge the early deployment of the 19 additional civilian experts approved last year. We support the Secretary-General's proposal that an independent assessment be conducted of PNTL capabilities.

All of this requires that we ensure the PNTL's long-term credibility and integrity. As an active and committed partner, we share the concerns at the recent certification of officers facing serious disciplinary and criminal allegations. This is a matter only the Government of Timor-Leste can resolve. While we appreciate the challenges, it is only by demonstrating that its personnel are as legally accountable as all other citizens that the PNTL will become the trusted and respected institution that Timor-Leste needs and deserves. We support the Secretary-General's call for early steps to address this issue.

Our immediate priority must be to ensure a smooth transition and stable and credible elections next year. It is also important to focus on Timor-Leste's needs beyond 2012. That period is harder to visualize, but we need to consider our respective roles in helping Timor-Leste address its longer-term challenges. Recent gains have been impressive but only concerted action will address the needs of the 41 per cent of the population still living below the poverty line. Urgent challenges remain in terms of developing infrastructure, addressing poverty and extending essential basic services.

New Zealand looks forward to the launch in June of the Government's National Strategic Development Plan, which must be Timorese-led and form the framework for future action by international partners. As a long-term partner, New Zealand will align its development assistance with the Plan's priorities.

New Zealand is proud of Timor-Leste's considerable achievements over the past decade and proud to call itself a neighbour, partner and friend of this young country. The Secretary-General's report suggests we are well on track to delivering a new Timor-Leste. New Zealand is committed to working with the Government and its international partners to help Timor-Leste deliver on that promise.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Australia.

Mr. Quinlan (Australia): I would like to thank you, Madame President, for presiding over this meeting. I would also like to acknowledge the presence in the Council today of Prime Minister Xanana Gusmão and to thank him for his briefing this morning. This is an opportunity to acknowledge that his own leadership and the constancy of his personal commitment to the people of Timor-Leste have been instrumental in the evolution of his nation.

I would also like to congratulate Special Representative Ameerah Haq for the crucial work she has been doing in Timor-Leste and for her helpful briefing this morning. Of course, I also want to thank the Secretary-General for that most recent report (S/2011/32).

The progress Timor-Leste that has made over the past few years is very impressive. The country today enjoys a measure of security that would have seemed almost unimaginable in the dark days of 2006. The security forces, working with the support of United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste (UNMIT), are developing the capacity to provide the security that will underpin Timor-Leste's development themselves. It is good to see that the National Police Force of Timor-Leste (PNTL) has now resumed primary policing responsibility in 10 of Timor-Leste's 13 districts, reflecting the significant progress the PNTL has made in recent years. An effective policing capacity is fundamental in any country, just as a mature and mutually understood relationship between the police and the military is critical.

When we look at East Timor today, we see a country that has had good rates of economic growth for the past four years. Timor-Leste's Petroleum Fund is performing well, which, together with wise public investment and diversification in the nation's development, should provide a sustainable basis into the future.

The support of the United Nations and the international community for Timor-Leste's development has been important in assisting the Government to make this progress. The United Nations still has a key role to play to help to ensure that progress made to date is sustained, as well as to continue to support Timor-Leste's ongoing development goals over both the short- and longer-terms.

In spite of the improvements of recent years, significant challenges remain, as we all know. There has been some progress in reducing poverty, increasing school enrolments, achieving immunization and tuberculosis control targets and reducing infant mortality. But the fact is that many of the Millennium Development Goal indicators are unfortunately still off track and poverty levels still remain high, particularly in rural areas. The health and education sectors remain underdeveloped. The economy remains heavily reliant on petroleum revenues. We encourage Timor-Leste to continue working to resolve uncertainties over land tenure and simplify business regulation, both measures which would encourage the private sector growth that is essential for economic development. It is also vital that Timor-Leste continue to strengthen the institutional framework for good governance. This will require strong and effective leadership — the sort of leadership we are in fact already seeing — and a commitment from all levels of Government, civil society and the broader community.

None of this, of course, is easy for any Government, and identifying the problems is in no way intended to sound negative, but rather to recall for all of us the enormity of task that still needs to be done. The Timor-Leste Government is showing real leadership in this task, but the international community continues to have a critical role to play.

The national elections scheduled for 2012 will be a key milestone and a significant test for the national police. As the Secretary-General has pointed out, it is impressive as well as determinative to hear politicians across the board in Timor-Leste eschew violence to achieve political ends. We remain hopeful that, like the suco elections in 2009, the national elections will proceed peacefully and help to further cement Timor-Leste's democratic foundations.

Australia supports the current plans outlined in the Secretary-General's report for the United Nations police contingent to conduct a modest drawdown this year and then remain steady until after the 2012 elections. Of course, the final drawdown should take into account the security environment in Timor-Leste at the time. We also support the decision to conduct an independent assessment of the PNTL and the United Nations-led police expert assessment mentioned in the Secretary-General's report.

Given that 2012 is close, there is clearly an urgent need to plan for the end of the United Nations Integrated Mission, not just in the policing sector but in respect of the broad range of support it provides in other sectors. We commend the work already done by the Government and UNMIT to commence this transition preparation and note that a lot more work will need to be done quickly to ensure that the transition process goes smoothly. This includes ensuring that donors have time to factor into their own planning any additional responsibilities that might ensue.

We welcome Timorese resumption of policing responsibilities. As I said, the resumption of primary policing responsibility in 10 of 13 districts and most units is a vital step. We look forward to the resumption of policing responsibility in the remaining districts once they have met the agreed conditions. It is important that the integrity and reputation of the PNTL is upheld, including through ensuring that the criminal or disciplinary cases against individual PNTL officers are completed and appropriate action taken.

Australia is aware that there will be an ongoing need to support the development of the PNTL's capability. We are working directly with Timor-Leste to improve the capacity of its security forces, through substantial bilateral programmes to assist with the development of the PNTL and the Timorese armed forces.

Through the International Stabilization Force (ISF) and our contribution to the United Nations police, Australia will continue to support the Timorese Government and UNMIT to maintain security. As requested by the Government of Timor-Leste, we expect that the International Stabilization Force will remain until after the 2012 elections. Future reductions in the ISF will be made in close consultation with the Timorese Government, our ISF partner New Zealand and the United Nations. We are keen to ensure that ISF structure and force levels are coordinated and commensurate with UNMIT.

On development, we have heard the Timorese Government's clear message to all of us,that the people of Timor-Leste must drive their own development agenda. We welcome the forthcoming release of Timor-Leste's Strategic Development Plan, which will guide our own contribution to Timor-Leste's development. We are currently its largest bilateral partner and this year we will deliver over $100 million through the partnership. This will help create employment by assisting Timor-Leste to improve agricultural productivity, infrastructure, vocational education, private sector development and labour-intensive works, such as road maintenance, which give jobs to young people. It will also support the delivery of health and education services and the Timorese Government's own efforts to improve Government accountability.

To return briefly to the question of youth unemployment, as we have said before the Council in the past, this remains perhaps the biggest single challenge and threat to future stability in Timor-Leste. This is not a unique situation, as we know. As is now starkly obvious, youth unemployment and its consequences are among the defining realities globally in our era.

In conclusion, let me state the obvious. Nation-building is a very hard thing to do. Outsiders all expect Governments to do probably too much in possibly too short a time. Too many countries still struggle to break the downward cycle. But Timor-Leste shows that it can be done. Australia itself has had what for us has been a unique bond with this new nation. We are very seriously committed to standing with Timor-Leste to help it secure a successful future, and to help it secure that future on Timor-Leste's own terms. The international community has equally been decisive in working for Timor-Leste's future. We have confidence that it will remain committed to what Prime Minister Gusmão himself described this morning as a noble mission.

The President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Pedro Serrano.

Mr. Serrano: Thank you, Madame President, for giving the floor to the European Union (EU). At the outset, I also wish to extend deep condolences to the Government and people of New Zealand for the loss of lives during the earthquake that shook Christchurch.

The candidate countries Turkey, Croatia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Montenegro, the countries of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidates Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia and the European Free Trade Association country Norway, member of the European Economic Area, as well as the Republic of Moldova, align themselves with this statement.

Let me start by greeting the Prime Minister of Timor-Leste, Mr. Xanana Gusmão, who has addressed the Council today for the first time. As a close partner of his country, the European Union is very pleased with its progress in many fields, in particular its strides towards long-term stability and its remarkable economic recovery. We commend his leadership and the closer cooperation of the stakeholders in Timor-Leste. Improved national dialogue and greater inclusiveness in the democratic process are delivering results, just as are the strong political commitment to fostering peace, unity and development. Let me also commend Timor-Leste's active engagement at the regional level, such as in the Regional Forum of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations.

I also welcome Special Representative of the Secretary-General Ameerah Haq, who has again provided an insightful and encouraging briefing on the situation in Timor-Leste. The European Union would like to thank her for the close cooperation in Dili and the good management of donor coordination, as well as the quality of her work.

As many speakers before me have stressed, the general elections in 2012 will be an important milestone for the country and its young democracy. The European Union has started to assist the preparations of the elections through training and capacity-building activities in several fields, such as gender empowerment, civic voter education and voter registration. We stand ready to consider further requests for assistance with a friendly eye.

Additionally, the European Union strongly supports the continuation of United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste (UNMIT) with a view to the critical period of the elections, as proposed by the Secretary-General and his Special Representative. We believe that the limited and gradual decrease in the Mission's police personnel serves to adapt UNMIT's capabilities to the progress towards the full resumption of primary policing responsibilities by the Policia Nacional de Timor-Leste, while allowing UNMIT police to assist with the important institutional development and capacity-building tasks in the security sector, including training on human rights, gender awareness and domestic violence, and to provide operational support if needed.

While the European Union welcomes the progress made by the national police, we would also like to stress in this context that it needs to live up to the highest standards of professionalism and integrity. The EU firmly supports the United Nations position about the certification of 52 national police officers who face serious disciplinary and criminal charges. Along with the Secretary-General, we urge the Government to take all necessary measures to ensure the credibility and accountability of the national police. The European Union also recognizes the continued importance of a comprehensive review and reform of the entire security sector.

While 2011 will mainly serve to consolidate achievements, address outstanding issues and prepare for 2012, the EU deems it of great importance to discuss the architecture of the future United Nations presence early and to prepare the exit strategy for UNMIT carefully, in order to ensure a sustainable transition and to help secure a continued stabilization of the country. In view of that, we welcome the fact that the joint High-Level Committee on Transition held its second quarterly meeting earlier this month and we look forward to regular updates on its work.

As the international presence transitions from peacekeeping to peacebuilding tasks, particular attention must be paid to strengthening institutional and human capacities, activities that are at the heart of the EU assistance programme. Moreover, possible additional support for selected Millennium Development Goals has just been announced to the Head of State.

The European Union is pleased with progress in the build-up of the judiciary, to which the EU contributes in the framework of a democratic governance programme. We have also followed with great interest Timor-Leste's efforts in coming to terms with its difficult past. It is true that Timor-Leste has taken some steps towards addressing impunity and improving accountability for crimes, but we would also like to encourage a full implementation of the recommendations of the United Nations Special Commission of Inquiry report of 2006.

We also believe that reconciliation is an important precondition for long-term stability, and is strongly in the interest of people of Timor-Leste itself. It is with that in mind that we are concerned about the recent decision of the National Parliament to indefinitely delay the debate of the draft laws on the public memorial institute and reparations. We urge the resumption of their consideration at the earliest possible occasion, as well as other steps to implement the recommendations of the Commission for Reception, Truth and Reconciliation.

In conclusion, Timor-Leste has seen accelerated progress in many aspects of its political, economic and social development. At the same time, the country still faces challenges and needs the continued assistance of bilateral and multilateral partners in order to fully realize its potential for equitable and sustainable development. For its part, the EU stands firmly by Timor-Leste's side and cooperates with it closely. After the visit of President Ramos-Horta to Brussels in October last year, EU Commissioner for Development Piebalgs will travel to Dili in the beginning of March to continue consultations with the Timorese leadership.

The President: His Excellency Prime Minister Xanana Gusmão has asked for the floor to make a further statement. I now give him the floor.

Mr. Gusmão (Timor-Leste): I wish to thank the members of the Council once again for their interest, concern and help. I very much appreciate the statements made by all members. We will take your words back to our country and we will make every effort to do what the Council asks of us.

We remain committed to working together with the international community. We will meet and work together because this is actually a critical phase of the transition. As members of the Council have recalled, we will hold elections next year. We want them to take place. We are committed to carrying out fair elections. We know that our elections will not just be something for us alone. They will also be of importance to many other countries that are in the same situation or are about to start this process.

On behalf of the people of Timor-Leste, I would like very much to thank all the members of the Security Council, as well as the representatives of Japan, Australia, New Zealand, the European Union and the Philippines, for their help and concern, but especially for their solidarity and generosity.

The President: I thank His Excellency Prime Minister Xanana Gusmão.

I now give the floor to Ms. Ameerah Haq for additional comments.

Ms. Haq: First of all, let me thank you very much, Madame President, for so ably chairing this meeting under Brazil's presidency. I also wish to thank you and all your colleagues for the excellent cooperation that we have had in this process. I would also like to convey my thanks to all the members of the Security Council for their expressions of support. Similarly, I would like to take this opportunity to thank Prime Minister Xanana Gusmão for having been here with us to continue the same expression of support for our work back in Dili. I would also like to thank all the Council members for the confidence that they have expressed in the United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste, as well as for the extension of the mandate. As the Prime Minister has so ably said, we will now again continue our work in Timor-Leste.

The President: I thank Ms. Ameerah Haq for her statement.

There are no further speakers inscribed on my list. The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The meeting rose at 1.20 p.m.